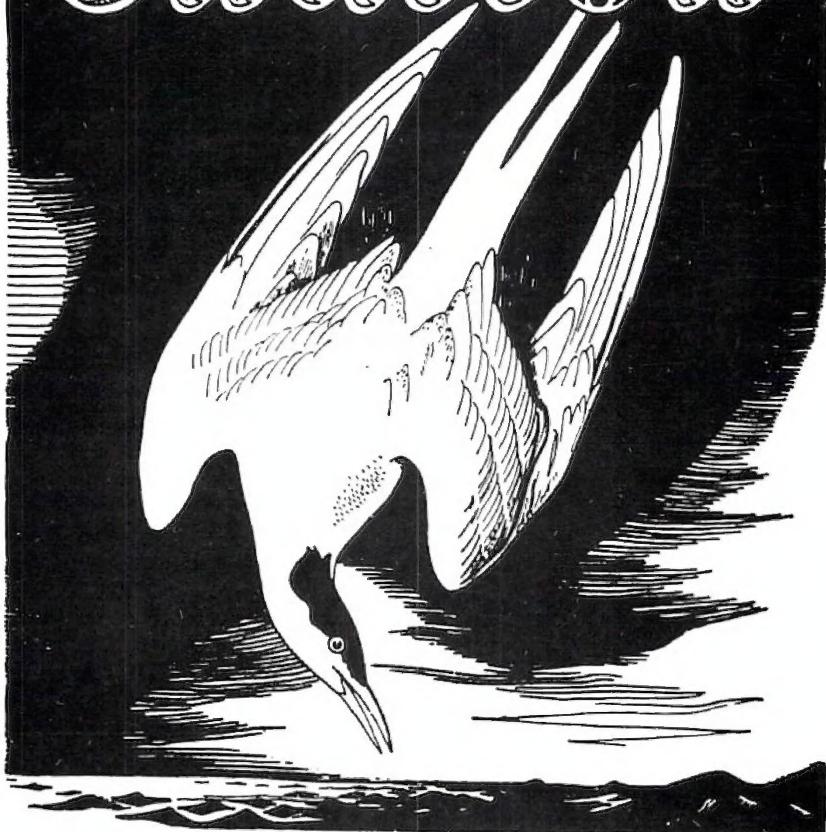


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# *the Sea Swallow*



BEING THE ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE ROYAL NAVAL  
BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

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## ROYAL NAVAL BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY

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For details of local representatives and other useful addresses see inside back cover.

*Subscription rates.* Full and Associate Members £8 (£7 if covenanted) annually. Library rates - Cost of *Sea Swallow* (£6) plus postage.

*Membership* has been widened from the R.N. to include all those who share a common background — the sea itself — regardless of nationality.\*

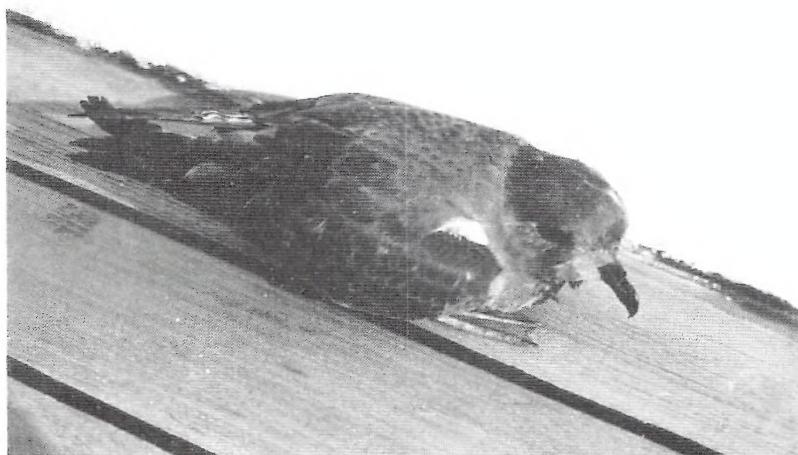
*Aims and activities.* The primary aim of the Society is to promote a forum for the exchange of information on seabirds, and of landbirds at sea, by members for whom birdwatching is a spare-time recreation and hobby. The secondary aim is to co-ordinate the efforts of individual members using standardised recording methods so that observations can be of value to the professional ornithologist ashore.

*RNBWS Record Forms.* Standardised forms for recording Seabirds and Landbirds at sea, Seabird Census sheets, Bird examined in the Hand (BEH) forms have been designed for use at sea. Stocks are kept by Warrant Officer C. A. R. Bailey, 8 Grange Close, Gosport, Hants. PO12 3DX. Please give detailed requirements and enclose a large stamped and addressed envelope.

Completed record forms (both seabirds and landbirds) should be sent to Michael Casement.

Material for publication in *Sea Swallow* should be sent to the Editor (see instructions to authors inside back cover).

\* An application form for membership is at page 76 in this edition of *Sea Swallow*.



Kerguelen Petrel *Lugensa brevirostris*

Upper: immature, showing fresh dark plumage

Lower: adult, faded worn plumage

Aboard RMS *St. Helena* anchored off Edinburgh settlement,  
St. Helena, 26 January 1993.

Photos: B. W. Rowlands

## PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

This past year has in some ways been a rather frustrating one, not just for us but for many other birdwatching organisations, and certainly for our sister societies in the Army and RAF. We in the RNBWS can perhaps take consolation from the fact that, while it has become ever more difficult to mount expeditions and group activities (very much the Army/Air Force bread and butter), we have kept up the standard of our own core activity of seabird observation. As a result, the reputation of the RNBWS remains high, and the unique opportunities many of our members have to make significant observations continue to lead to much consultation and liaison with scientific and conservation bodies. These links are very valuable to us, and one benefit should be seen in the advanced planning for our projected expedition to the Madeiran Archipelago, which is still scheduled for the spring of 1994.

So why the frustration? Well, for a start there has been a reduction in the strength of the RN and MN, though I have to say there is plenty of activity in my 'neck of the woods', the Adriatic, where the RN and the RFA are present in some numbers, and indeed have sent in some seabird observations. I am also very well aware of the increasing pressures on seafarers today, while the Naval Secretary hasn't helped either, by sending our Expedition leader to sea! But my main unease comes from a feeling that we aren't doing enough to help ourselves. To be blunt, I would like to see more commitment from our members, and more activity. Perhaps we should each aim to recruit a new member in the coming year. Let's have some of your letters and ideas published in *Sea Swallow* and the *Bulletin*; let's all try and do **something** for the RNBWS.

*David Dobson*

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Viewed from a MOD desk, the past year has seen continued erosion of the old certainties, and an exciting mix of new tasks and leadership challenges for all three services. In RNBWS we should therefore expect some of the developments which our President has outlined in his Foreword. I am confident that RNBWS will continue to play a lead role in building up the worldwide seabird database. I also believe that our shorebased initiatives will not be stillborn. However, I am absolutely certain that we do need more hands at the pump! In a slimmer organisation there is no such thing as a '*quiet number*', and the efficient running of the RN's Clubs and Societies, the coordination of field programmes, and the planning of events, all require **team** effort. I would be grateful to hear from anyone who believes that they can help.

You will have read in the *Bulletin* of the rewards enjoyed by the tiny group who supported the first RNBWS weekend meeting, at Portland in May 1992. You will also have seen the appeal for volunteers for our first expedition, for which an excellent plan has evolved. All we need now is the people! Even if you cannot take part yourself, please do make this rewarding opportunity known — it should be a good tool for recruiting!

Meanwhile, the reputation which is based on the fieldwork reported annually in this journal continues to bring regular requests for information, advice and cooperation. I would, therefore, like to end with a tribute to the effort and self-discipline of all those who devote their time to making the fruits of their opportunities for exploration and study available to us all.

MICHAEL BARRITT, Chairman

## EDITORIAL

This is an unusually thick volume this year which will become, I hope, a well-thumbed reference for all who study seabirds. While the international debate about the renaming of birds still rages, we believe it is important that the views of RNBWS should be heard concerning seabird names, so we have compiled our own preferred seabird checklist. Comments are invited from members, and we will aim to stick to these names, at least until international agreement is achieved.

Albatross articles also feature largely, and in particular the Albatross Atlas compiled by Dr. Lance Tickell, which is published complete with the long list of references, because this demonstrates the important role of RNBWS observations, over many years, to build up our total knowledge about this very important group of seabirds. As the article by Dirk Briggs, Peter Prince and John Croxall shows, there is much more important work to be done. RNBWS members can continue to play a major part in adding to the distribution and feeding data, and thus help safeguard these populations for the future.

The number of regular RNBWS reporters is still in decline, but it is good to see that many have been active, and I welcome the contributions from the dedicated group in Naples, and also the delightful sketches by Lizzie Gale. Captain Dave Simpson continues to regale me with detailed notes of his activities in the Fly River (New Guinea) and also his observations in the Philippines and elsewhere, but these have been held over until next year.

Fewer photographs are included this year, not only because of space constraints, but because there is a dearth of worthy photographs reaching me. Please do your best with your cameras for next year.

On a very sad note, we have recently lost our very illustrious past President, Admiral Sir Nigel Henderson (see below).

Michael Casement

## OBITUARY

### **Admiral Sir Nigel Henderson, GBE, KCB, DL (1907-1993)**

It is with the greatest sadness that we report the death, on 2 August, of yet another founder member of RNBWS and one of its chief architects throughout its history since 1946; he was our longest serving President, from 1961-83, and thereafter continued to take a very close interest in

our affairs, as a Vice-President. On retirement from active service in 1971, he settled in Galloway, Scotland, but he frequently travelled to London to be present at our AGMs.

It was due to his personal influence and intervention that the Commander-in-Chief Fleet tasked HMS *Brighton* to land Dr Lancelot Tickell and a small naval party on the volcanic Japanese island of Toroshima, in April/May 1973, to study the last surviving small breeding colony of Steller's (or Short-tailed) Albatross *Diomedea albatrus*. A brief account of this epic expedition is to be found in *Sea Swallow* 23:21-24.

In Feb/March 1974, he made a memorable trip as "Chief Observer" aboard HMS *Endurance*, conducting a survey of uncharted waters off Antarctica, and his observations are summarised in *Sea Swallow* 24:15-17.

Throughout a long and highly distinguished military career, about which much has been rightly written in the official obituaries in the newspapers, he nevertheless managed to make time to pursue a lifetime interest in natural history, and especially in birds. He was also an accomplished water-colourist, and persevered with his paintings to within weeks of his death. The church in Castle Douglas was packed with senior military and other friends for his memorial service on 18 August, but the theme of the address focused on these aspects of his life, and the numerous local activities in which he was involved, since his retirement.

He leased a delightful tract of marsh and woodland beside the River Dee/Loch Ken to the RSPB, which has now become an important reserve for wintering wildfowl. A neighbour, Bryan Nelson, reports that "he became active in local bird matters, and President of the Galloway Members Group, where he gave sage advice. Although a far cry from chairing the NATO Military Committee in Washington and Brussels to attending a committee of an obscure local bird group, it is one measure of the man that he was as punctilious about the latter as he evidently was about the former."

I first came to know him in about 1947, when he was Commander of HMS *Excellent* (Whale Island), and I a teenage schoolboy then bent on collecting caterpillars. I travelled to Portsmouth during my summer holidays, and he kindly made time to show me where best to find Puss Moth caterpillars, in the poplar trees near West Battery. Some 24 years later, when he was chairman of the Military Committee in Brussels, and I a very junior Commander visiting from MOD London for a meeting at NATO HQ, we chanced to meet face to face in a corridor. His first question to me was about the latest state of health of RNBWS.

He was my guide and mentor during the transition, when I succeeded Captain Gerald Tuck, as Chairman and Editor, in 1980, and I owe him a tremendous debt for his kind advice and support at all times. And it was through him that, some 25 years ago, RNBWS was first introduced to our printers, Dinwiddie Grieve, in nearby Dumfries. We shall all miss him greatly.

**M.B.C.**

## NOTES ON SEABIRD REPORTS RECEIVED IN 1992

by Captain N.G. Cheshire, MN.

The volume of reports received in 1992 was similar to that of last year and distribution of observers' effort was: North Atlantic 23%, South Atlantic 26%, Caribbean 8%, North Pacific 38%, Indian Ocean 3%, Persian Gulf 1%, Mediterranean 1%. All observers who contributed are thanked for their interesting reports and in particular Martin G. Weir for his detailed observations from the North Pacific and Bering Sea.

Reference to some recently published notes and papers on seabirds has been made in the notes on species. Members interested in a comprehensive summary of recent seabird literature can consult the *Zoological Record*, section *Aves*, available at larger libraries.

Contributors who encounter birds well outside the normal range or season are requested to include a full description of what they see, and if possible a sketch or photograph. This will also enable their record to be properly considered by any national or local record committee if the need arises. Notes on the behaviour of birds at sea and feeding methods are of considerable interest.

## OBSERVERS SENDING NOTES DURING 1992

B.Ellis Persian Gulf. Feb-Mar'92. (1N 1Map).

Radio Officer M.G.Finn MV *Morelos*. Long Beach-Yokohama and return Nov'91-Jan'92, Long Beach-Yokohama and return Jan-Mar'92 (4C) *Altamira* NW Europe-Vera Cruz-Galveston-NW Europe, 2 return voyages Jul-Oct'92 (4C) UK-Vera Cruz Oct-Nov'92 (1C).

POMA P.K.Fitzpatrick HMS *Active*. Plymouth-Gibraltar-Falklands Jan-Feb'92 (15R 2C), Falklands-Uruguay-South Georgia-Falklands Feb-Apr'92 (1R 8C) Falklands-Barbados-Boston-UK May-Jul'92 (4C) SW England Aug'92 (2R).

Chief Officer M.C.Littlewood MV *London Spirit*. Multiple voyages from Salina Cruz/Manzanillo Mexico-California Feb-May'92 (17R 2 computer tables).

Chief Officer A.R.Louch RRS *Discovery*. Tenerife-Capetown-Capetown-Falklands Sep-Nov'92 (3C).

Bridge Team HMS *Newcastle* (HMSN). Portsmouth-Athens May-Jun'92, Suez-Seychelles-Diego Garcia Jun-Jul'92, Singapore-UK Sep-Nov'92 (4C).

Capt. J.B.Nichols RV *Farnella*. San Francisco-Panama-Hull Aug'92 (5N).

A.H. Todd RFA *Grey Rover*. Falklands-Barbados May'92 Caribbean-UK Jun-Jul'92 (3C 4R).

Capt. M.G.Weir MV *OOCL Envoy*. Yokohama-Seattle-Vancouver-Kobe-Kachsing Vancouver-Kobe Mar-May'92 Yokohama-Seattle-Vancouver-Kobe May-Jun'92 (5C 4R 6N).

**Key.** R-RNBWS Report Sheets, C-RNBWS Census Sheets, B-RNBWS Bird in hand Forms, N-other notes, P-Photographs.

## NOTES ON SPECIES

### PENGUINS *SPHENISCIDAE*

**King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus*.** On passage along the coast of South Georgia PKF reported 20+ at 54.2°S 36.4°W on 4 Apr'92.

### ALBATROSSES *DIOMEDEIDAE*

**Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*.** Heading south for the

Falklands, PKF saw his first at 32.8°S 34.7°W on 14 Feb'92 and thereafter encountered small numbers within the normal South Atlantic range with a maximum of 10 at 54.2°N 36.4°E near South Georgia on 4 Apr'92. Northbound in the South Atlantic, AHT saw the last at 28.1°S 41.4°W on 21 May'92 (sea temp. 22.2°C). On passage from Capetown to Port Stanley, ARL had between three and nine each day during an hourly count each evening until going south of the sub-tropical convergence at 42.4°S 30.5°W. Wanderers reappeared in small numbers when he approached the Falklands. Two new sub-species and plumages of Wandering Albatrosses breeding on New Zealand sub-Antarctic islands have been described by Robertson and Warham (1992), but it should be realised that these birds may show much variation from their illustrations.

**Black-footed Albatross *Diomedea nigripes*.** Many observations by MGF, JBN, MCL and MGW from the normal N. Pacific range north to 47.1°N. There was a maximum count by MGF of six immatures and one adult at 37.6°N 166°W on 2 Jan'92. MGW saw three close inshore off Honshu at 34.9°N 140.4°E on 29 Apr'92 and HMSN reported one at 23.3° 124.4°E, E of Taiwan on 19 Jul'92. During several voyages between California and the west coast of Mexico, Mar-May'92, MCL recorded small numbers north of 24°N with one south of the normal range at 20°N 106.7°W on 27 Mar'92.

**Laysan Albatross *Diomedea immutabilis*.** A large number of records from the N. Pacific with a maximum count by MGW of 14 in four hours at 42.6°N 164.2°E on 27 Apr'92. He also saw 19 at 54°N 180°W and 25 at 24°N 176.3°W in the Bering Sea on the 29 and 30 May'92, also three feeding on pink-coloured squid whilst his ship was stopped at 44.1°N 157.5°E on 1 Jan'92. MGF observed two land on a container aboard his ship, then sit facing with touching bills as in courtship at 36°N 128°W on 6 Jan'92.

**Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*.** In the eastern S. Atlantic, on passage from Tenerife to Capetown, ARL recorded the first, an immature at 17.4°S 4°E on 28 Sep'92 (sea temp. 18.6°C) and had the highest number, ten including two immatures, at 32.3°S 16.9°C off SW Africa on 2 Oct'92. ARL recorded small numbers most days en route from Capetown to Port Stanley with a maximum of eight adults near the sub-tropical convergence at 42.4°S 30.5°W on 30 Oct'92. PKF saw 14 at 54.1°S 36.5°W off South Georgia on 3 Apr'92. Northbound from the Falklands, AHT recorded the last two at 28.1°S 41.4°W (sea temp 22.2°C) on 21 May'92.

**Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta*.** Recorded only by ARL, who counted 27 in 90 minutes at 34.6°S 17.2°E off South Africa on 12 Oct'92.

**Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos*.** AHT saw one at 28.1°S 41.4°W off southern Brazil on 21 May'92. ARL had small numbers between 28.6°S 13.5°E and 34.6°S 17.5°E on the shelf-break area off southern Africa from 1-3 Oct'92.

**Grey-headed Albatross *Diomedea chrysostoma*** Several S. Atlantic reports, most from south of the sub-tropical convergence. ARL reported singles at 38.3°S 16.3°W on 27 Oct'92, at 42.4°S 30.5°W on 30 Oct,

at 43.9°S 34.9°W on 31 Oct, at 45.5°S 39°W on 1 Nov, and at 47°S 43.7°W on 2 Nov'92. AHT reported three at 48.9°S 54.9°W N of the Falklands on 16 May'92.

**Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca*.** AHT saw three at 41.6°S 48.9°W on 18 May'92 and one at 37.4°S 46.2°W the following day. ARL had three sightings between Capetown and the Falklands - a single at 35.3°S 7.6°E on 23 Oct, three at 36°S 2.1°W the next day and one at 42.4°S 30.5°W on 30 Oct'92. PKF also reported 21 of this species at 54.1°S 36.5°W off South Georgia on 3 Apr'92 and one near the Falklands at 52°S 58.1°W on 1 May'92. This is very rare off the Falklands, and such large numbers off S. Georgia are unacceptable without a detailed description - probably Light-mantled? - see below.

**Light-mantled Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata*.** In the South Georgia area, PKF saw 12 at 54.1°S 36.5°W on 3 Apr'92 and four nearby at 54.2°S 36.4°W the next day. AHT reported two at 48.9°S and 54.9°W NE of the Falklands on 16 May'92 and one at 41.6°S 48.9°W on 18 May'92.

## FULMARS, PRIONS, PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS PROCELLARIIDAE

**Giant Petrel *Macronectes* sp.** Several reports from the Falklands - South Georgia area, including one found aboard dead by PKF, who noted a greenish tip to the bill (*M. giganteus*?) at 51.7°S 59.4°W on 14 Mar'92. He also reported 13 at 54.1°S 36.5°W on 3 Apr'92 and 22 the next day at 54.2°S 36.4°W NE of the Falklands AHT reported four at 48.9°S 54.9°W.

**Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*.** Most records were from the North Pacific and Bering Sea with small numbers recorded between 44.1°N-54.5°N, 157.3°E - 1480 (MGW, MGF). In U.K. waters PKF saw 38 close inshore off Newquay on 13 Aug'92.

**Cape Petrel *Daption capense*.** Records from the S. Atlantic included 200+ seen by PKF at 54.2°S 36.4°W near South Georgia on 4 Apr'92 and 80+ on the water close to a large iceberg observed by AHT at 48.4°S 54.9°W on 16 May'92. Subsequently AHT recorded them north to 28.1°S 41.3°W off southern Brazil on 21 May'92. ARL recorded small numbers most days between Capetown and the Falklands with highest counts of five at 43.9°S 34.9°W on 31 Oct'92 and five at 45.4°S 39°W the next day.

**Snow Petrel *Pagodroma nivea*.** A single bird was seen by PKF at 54.1°S 36.5°W off South Georgia on 3 Apr'92 (sea temp 3°C).

**Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*.** ARL reported one at 35°S 16.3°E off South Africa on 10 Oct'92 and another further offshore at 34.8°S 11.1°W on 22 Oct'92.

**Atlantic Petrel *Pterodroma incerta*.** Several records from the usual S. Atlantic range including 19 seen by PKF at 43.9°S 59.1°W on 18 Mar'92 and 30 the next day at 36.7°S 55°W. AHT saw them north to 28.1°S 41.4°W on 21 May'92. The distribution at sea has been summarised by J. W. Enticott (1991), and vagrancy to the western Palearctic discussed by Bourne (1992a).

**Mottled Petrel *Pterodroma inexpectata*.** This trans-equatorial migrant was reported from its wintering area in the North Pacific by MGW, who saw seven singles at 48.90°N 179.1°W on the 25 Apr'92 and a group of three at 53.7°N 148°E on 19 May'92.

**Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis*.** In the SE Atlantic ARL had several sightings including one at 17.4°S 4°E on 28 Sep'92, six singles at 34.6°S 17.5°E on 13 Oct'92 and nine singly and in groups at 41°S 27.2°W on 29 Oct'92.

**Blue Petrel *Halobaena caerulea*.** Recorded off South Georgia by PKF who saw four at 54.1°S 36.5°W and 14 at 54.2°S 36.40°W on the 3 and 4 Apr'92.

**Prion *Pachyptila* spp.** 1000+ reported as Antarctic Prion *P. desolata* were seen by PKF at 54.2°S 36.4°W on 4 Apr'92. AHT saw 100+ near an iceberg at 48.9°S 54.9°W on 16 May'92 and "hundreds" at 41.6°S 48.9°W on 18 May'92.

**Grey Petrel *Procellaria cinerea*.** One was described by PKF at 39.2°S 42.1°W on 16 Feb and two at 47.4°S 52°W on 18 Feb'92. AHT reported two at 48.9°S 54.9°W NE of the Falklands on 16 May'92 and "small numbers" the next day at 41.6°S 48.90.

**White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*.** Widespread reports from the S. Atlantic area including three seen by ARL at 13.1°S 00.3°E and eight at 13.7°S 00.8°E (sea temp 19.1°C) on 27 Sep'92. He also recorded 40 in groups in 2 hours at 32.3°S 16.9°E off South Africa on 2 Oct'92. AHT saw three at 28.1°S 41.3°W off southern Brazil on 21 May'92 which included one with the extensive white facial markings of the distinct Tristan subspecies, also known as "Spectacled Petrel" *conspicillata*.

**Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*.** MGW saw vast numbers "as far as the eye could see" near the breeding islands at 33.4°N 135.9°E off Honshu on 26 Mar'92. He also saw one well offshore in the central Pacific at 42.6°N 164.2°E on 27 Apr'92 and 15 at 29.5°N 128.5°E in the E. China Sea on 3 May'92.

**Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*.** Many N. Atlantic records including a report of 40 at 49°N 24°W on 18 Aug'92 by MGF.

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*.** HMSN reported 15+ at 12.3°N 51.3°E off Cape Guardafui on 10 Jun'92. (COMMENT. It seems possible these may have been confused with Jouanin's Petrels here - WRPB).

**Buller's Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*.** An interesting record from MCL who described one seen closely and saw 20 more probables in the distance at 24.3°N 112.5°W off Baja California on 11 May'92. Stallcup (1990) regards the species as common most years in N. Californian waters from late July to November.

**Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*.** Several records from the N. Pacific by MGW. He had a tentative record of six at 54°N 161.5°W on 18 May'92, described two seen well at 53.7°N 148°W the next day, 12 at 54°N 156°W on 27 May and saw three at 54°N 180°W in the Bering Sea on 29 May'92.

**Pink-footed Shearwater *Puffinus creatopus*.** MGW described three seen at 54°N 156°W south of Alaska on 27 May'92 and JBN reported 40+ in small flocks on the sea surface at 16°N 99°W off southern Mexico on 8 Aug'92.

**Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*.** Many records from around the N. and S. Atlantic including 50+ seen off the N end of the Falklands on 19 Feb'92 and 200+ at 36.7°S 55°W in the River Plate approaches on 19 Mar'92 (PKF). AHT made a series of observations off the east coast of South America during May'92 with four at 48.9°S 54.9°W on 16th, "small numbers" at 37.4°S 46.2°W on 19th, 19 at 13.3°S 35.6°W on 24th, 15 at 8.1°S 34.4°W on 25th and a single at 3.4°S 36.1°W on 26th. PKF also saw 30 in groups off the USA coast at 40.3°N 68.5°W on 8 Jul'92. Autumn records from South African waters by ARL included six singles at 32.2°S 16.9°E on 2 Oct'92 and 13 singles at 34.5°S 17.5°E on 13 Oct'92.

**Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*.** Several April records by MGW from the N. Pacific including 38 at 48.9°N 179.1°W on 25th, 80 with Short-tails the next day at 45.1°N 170.5°E, 135 at 38.8°N 153°E on the 28th and 35 at 34.9°N 140.4°E on the 29th.

**Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*.** Vast numbers of migrating birds were encountered by MGW at 48.9°N 179.1°W south of the Aleutians on 25 Apr'92, and 600 in a mixed flock with Sooties at 45.1°N 170.5°E on 26 Apr'92. He also recorded 17 at 54°N 180°W and 90+ at 54°N 176.3°W in the Bering Sea on 29 and 30 May'92.

**Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*.** PKF reported six at 47.6°N 36.6°W in the North Atlantic on 23 Jul'92. The first records for Chilean waters near Cape Horn (Dec'84) and in the Straits of Magellan (Jan'85) have been published by Clarke et al (1992).

**Black-vented Shearwater *Puffinus opisthomelas*.** In Californian waters, MCL reported 20 at 33.7°N 119.6°W on 4 Mar'92.

**Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*.** Reported from the SE Atlantic during Oct'92 by ARL who saw one at 34.6°S 17.7°E on the 12th, two at 35.5°S 7.6°E on the 23rd, six singles in an hour at 36°S 2.1°E the following day and four singles in an hour at 38.2°S 16.3°W on 27th.

## STORM-PETRELS HYDROBATIDAE

**Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*.** There were many records from the S. Atlantic with a few from the N. Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. Of note were seven seen by PKF at 40.3°N 68.5°W off the east coast USA on 8 Jul'92, four by ARL at 17.4°S 4°E offshore from Namibia on 28 Sep'92 and 200+ reported by HMSN at 12.3°N 51.3°E near Cape Guardafui on 10 Jun'92.

**Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta tropica*.** ARL reported two at 35°S 16.3°E off South Africa on 10 Oct'92 and a single at 34.6°S 17.7°E on 12 Oct'92.

**Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*.** MGF found the species aboard his ship in the N. Atlantic - three at 45°N 39.9°W in fog on 1 Oct'92 and one at 48.7°N 23.7°W on 3 Oct'92; in the N. Pacific -

one at 47.1°N 142°W on 1 Dec'91. A chart summarising dates and positions of Leach's found aboard ships based on RNBWS records has now been published (Bourne 1992b). MGW reported one at 37.6°N 142.9°E of Honshu on 25 Mar'92, described two seen at 54°N 161.5°W on 18 May'92 and six at 54°N 156°W on 27 May'92. He also saw a sooty brown storm-petrel with pale wing bird and a fast buoyant flight at 50.8°N 159.8°E SE of Kamchatka on 22 Mar'92. This may have been a dark-rumped Leach's or the closely related Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *O. monorhis*.

**Black Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma Melania*.** In the eastern Pacific, MCL had large black fork-tailed storm-petrels following his ship from periods of 30 minutes to most of the day which he identified as this species. He saw one at 33.7°N 119.7°W on 4 Mar'92, 15 at 17.4°N 102.4°W on 2 Apr'92 and 14 at 25.8°N 114.2°W on 11 May'92.

**Fork-tailed Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma furcata*.** MGW made several observations of this distinctive N. Pacific storm-petrel with one at 42.6°N 164.2°E on 27 Apr'92, another at 54°N 161.5°W on 18 May'92, 27 at 54°N 156°W on 22 May'92, 21 at 54°N 180°E in the Bering Sea on 29 May'92 and 250+ the next day at 54°N 176.3°E also in the Bering Sea.

#### **TROPICBIRDS *PHAETHONTIDAE***

**Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*.** In the Caribbean area, AHT saw an adult with a large feeding flock of other seabirds at 12°N 62.5°W NNW of Grenada on 12 Jun'92 and another at 16.7°N 62.3°W, 10nm W of Montserrat on 23 Jun'92. In the eastern Pacific, MCL reported one at 17.2°N 102°W on 24 Feb'92 and one at 24.12°N 112.7°W on 11 Apr'92.

**Yellow-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*.** AHT saw three whilst his ship was at anchor in Road Bay Anguilla, and two NW of the island at 18.9°N 63.3°W on 26 and 29 Jun'93. MGF described three seen well north of the normal range at 40.5°N 64°W (about 500 miles E from New York) on 28 Sep'92. In the Indian Ocean, HMSN reported one at 3.6°S 55.6°E and another at 3.1°S 56°E on the 24 and 25 Jun'92.

#### **PELICANS *PELECANIDAE***

**Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*.** Twenty were seen at 18.2°N 63.2°W off Anguilla by PKF on 26 Jun'92.

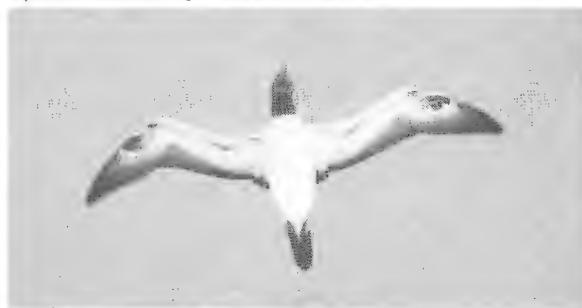
#### **GANNETS AND BOOBIES *SULIDAE*.**

**Cape Gannet *Morus capensis*.** Several records from ARL in shelf waters around South Africa. An interesting observation by PKF who described seven gannets seen at 23.6°N 16.9°E off Mauritania on 24 Jan'92. These had full black tails and the black of the upperwing extended across the secondaries. Paterson and Riddiford (1990) discuss northern records of Cape Gannets and quote a ringing return from 21.7°N off Mauritania.

**Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*.** Several records from the tropical Atlantic, Caribbean and eastern Pacific from JBN, AHT, MGF and MCL. At Ascension Island anchorage, PKF reported 70+ on 8 Feb'92.

**Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*.** Recorded from the Caribbean, eastern tropical Pacific and the China Sea. Observations of note include 25 seen by MGW at 30.1°N 129.6°E near Tokara Gunto in the E. China Sea on 28 Mar'92; 60 recorded by MCL off W. coast of Mexico at 17.4°N 102.4°W on 2 Apr'92 and 50+ in a mixed feeding flock seen by AHT at 12°N 62.5°W near Grenada on 12 Jun'92.

**Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*.** A few records from the Caribbean and eastern tropical Pacific by AHT and JBN.



Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*, immature, underside - near Cato Island, southern Coral Sea, 23.2°N 155.5°E, 20 Feb'93

Photo: Captain Neil Cheshire, MN

## FRIGATEBIRDS *FREGATIDAE*

**Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*.** A few reports from the Caribbean and central America by PKF, JBN and MCL including six seen by PKF at 18.2°N 63.2°W near Anguilla on 6 Jun'92 and four reported by MCL at 23°N 116.6°W in the eastern Pacific on 11 Apr'92.

## PHALAROPES *PHALAROPODIDAE*

**Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*.** In the eastern Pacific, MCL reported two at 35.9°N 122.2°W on 23 Mar'92 and five at 26.8°N 114.9°W on 25 Mar'92. He also recorded 100+ in Manzanillo Harbour, Mexico from 16-18 Mar'92.

## SHEATHBILLS *CHIONIDIDAE*

**Yellow-billed sheathbill *Chionis alba*.** PKF saw one at 54.3°S 36.4°W near South Georgia on 4 Apr'92 and one at 52°S 58.2°W near the Falklands on 1 May'92.

## SKUAS *STERCORARIINAE*

**Great Skua *Catharacta skua*.** One was described by PKF from 35.6°N 5.6°W, SW approaches to Straits of Gibraltar on 21 Jan'92. He subsequently recorded seven following his ship at 11.3°N 17.5°W off West Africa on 27 Jan'92 and one further south at 4.1°N 8.5°W on 29 Jan'92. Many photographs are given by Gantlett & Harrap (1992) and some misconceptions concerning size, bill structure, pale nape and prominence of white wing flashes in the field separation of McCormick's Skua from Great Skua, are discussed by Lansdown (1993).

**Southern Skua *Catharacta (skua) antarctica*.** Several records from South African waters during Oct'92 (ARL). PKF saw three at 54.2°S 36.4°W close to South Georgia on 4 Apr'92.

**McCormick's Skua *Catharacta maccormicki*.** One was reported by PKF near South Georgia on 4 Apr'92.

**Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*.** A series of sightings were made by ARL from the eastern Atlantic during Sep'92. He saw three adults and two immatures at 22°N 19.7°W off Mauritania on the 18th, one the next day at 17.2°N 18°W, a group of four at 13.7°S 0.8°E on the 27th, three at 17.2°S 4°E on 28th, 27 singly and in groups at 21.3°S 7.1°E on 29th and a single at 25°S 10.3°E on the 30th. In the N. Pacific, MGW reported one at 36.6°N 150.8°E, E of Japan on 5 Mar'92 and in Californian waters MCL reported one at 33°N 120.3°W on 19 Mar'92 and another at 34.2°N 121.8°E on 19 Apr'92.

**Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*.** One was seen by MGW at 54°N 161.5°W eastern N. Pacific on 18 May'92 and another the next day at 53.7°N 148°W.

#### **GULLS LARINAE**

**Japanese Gull *Larus crassirostris*.** An offshore record from the western Pacific by MGW who saw an adult and two immatures at 36.6°N 150.3°E on 5 Mar'92.

**Audouin's Gull *Larus audouini*.** Formerly this was a rare bird seldom seen outside the Mediterranean. Following the remarkable increase at the Spanish colonies, which now number thousands of pairs, it has been found there is a substantial migration past Gibraltar and down the west coast of Africa in the winter, and Stephen Halse reports that a first-year bird was seen resting with terns as far south as Toll Point on the shore of the Gambia River (16.38°N 13.07°W) on 25 Nov'82.

**Common Gull *Larus canus*.** MGW described three seen at 54.5°N 165°W when entering the Bering Sea via Unimak Pass on 19 Mar'92.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*.** HMSN reported an adult at 36.4°N 20.3°W in the N. Atlantic on 21 May'92.

**Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*.** MGF saw one at 42.5°N 134.9°E east of Japan on 30 Nov'91 and MGW saw two further offshore at 37.6°N 142.9°E on 25 Mar'92.

**Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*.** MGW provided a series of records from the N. Pacific area with eight adults at 54.5°N 165°W in Unimak Pass on 19 Mar'92, one at 54°N 177°W in the Bering Sea the next day, one adult at 52.3°N 168.1°E east of Kamchatka on 21 Mar'92, three east of Japan at 37.6°N 142.9°E on 25 Mar'92 and one at 54°N 161.5°W on 18 May'92.

**Western Gull *Larus occidentalis*.** In Californian waters, MCL reported six at 34.2°N 121.2°W 34nm offshore on 4 Mar'92 and one at 33°N 120.3°W offshore on 19 Mar'92.

**Iceland, Kumlien's and Thayer's Gulls *Larus glaucopterus*, *L.g. kumlieni* and *L.g. thayeri*.** The first of these arctic Herring-type gulls

with comparatively round heads and weak bills has white wings, and tends to winter on the east side of the N. Atlantic. The second, which usually has some dark in the wing-tips and winters on the west side of the Atlantic, has long been treated as a race. It now seems increasingly clear that the third, which has more dark in the wing-tip, winters on the east side of the Pacific, and has usually been regarded as either a race of the Herring Gull or a distinct species, is probably also best treated as a race of the first. The identification problem they present in Britain is discussed, with many photographs, by Millington (1993). MGW saw a medium-large gull with white body, silver-grey upper-wings and dark grey wing-tips he tentatively identified as Thayer's at 45.1°N 161.2°W in the eastern N. Pacific on 10 Mar'92.

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*. MGF described several from the N. Pacific with one at 47.1°N 142°W on 1 Dec'91, another the next day at 51.1°N 151.7°W, two in the Bering Sea at 54°N 173°E on 6 Dec'91, and seven adults at 54°N 140°W on 29 Jan'92.

**Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus*. 20 were seen by PKF at 54.1°S 36.5°W off South Georgia on 3 Apr'92, an immature was seen by AHT at 48.9°S 54.9°W about 180nm north of the Falklands on 16 May'92. In South African waters, ARL recorded 125 in groups at 34.6°S 17.7°E on 12 Oct'92 and 25 nearby at 34.5°S 17.5°E the following day.

**Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichi*. HMSN had a juvenile aboard at 24.7°N 36.8°W in the central Red Sea on 3 Nov'92.

**Laughing Gull** *Larus articilla*. In the Caribbean, PKF recorded four adults at 18.2°N 63.2°W near Anguilla on 6 Jun'92, AHT saw two adults nearby at 18.2°N 63.5°W on 29 Jun'92.

**Great Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus*. Several records of wintering birds in the Persian Gulf by BE: Tanajib one on 19 Feb'92 and three on 23 Feb'92 in breeding plumage; Marjan oil-field 28.4°N 49.8°E, two on 22 Feb'92 and three on 26 Feb; singles at Ras Tanura on 2, 3 and 9 Mar'92.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*. PKF reported four following his ship at 23.6°N 16.9°W off Mauritania on 24 Jun'92. In the Persian Gulf, BE reported 50 at Ras Tanura on 8 Mar'92. MGW observed one in breeding plumage at 37.6°N 142.9°E 130nm E. of Honshu on 25 Mar'92 and saw 21 at 34.9°N 140.4°E inshore off Honshu on 29 Apr'92. Occurrences in North America by Nikula (1993) who reports an annual peak of 200+ mainly immature birds at St. John's Newfoundland in November.

**Slender-billed Gull** *Larus genei*. In the Persian Gulf at Tanajib, BE recorded one on 19 Feb and 34 on 24 Feb'92, and at Ras Tanur he saw three on 8 Mar'92.

**Saunders' Gull** *Larus saundersi*. Apparently this little-known species is now reduced to about 2,000 birds which breed on the salt-marshes of the estuaries around the Yellow Sea, and winter off river-mouths from Southern Japan to the Gulf of Tonkin (Brazil and Moores, 1993).

**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*. Many records from the normal N. Pacific range by MGF and MGW.

## TERNS STERNIDAE

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*.** ARL reported one at 12.3°N 18°W off West Africa on 20 Sep'92.

**Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*.** PKF saw one at 23.6°N 16.9°W off Mauritania on 24 Jan'92. BE reported three at Tanajib, Persian Gulf, on 19 Feb'92. In the Gulf of Mexico, MGF saw one at 23°N 90°E on 12 Sep'92.

**Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*.** Four migrating birds were seen by ARL in the tropical Atlantic at 05.°N 10.5°W on 23 Sep'92 and another three were seen by him at 3°S 7.8°W the following day. MGW reported two at 53.7°N 148°W in the N. Pacific.

**Aleutian Tern *Sterna aleutica*.** A news-item by Leader (1992) reports that almost 200 stopped to moult at Hong Kong during their southward migration in Aug-Sep'92; according to *Oriental Bird Club Bull* 17:50, 190 were recorded on a boat trip south of Hong Kong Island on 22 Aug, and c.17 were recorded still present on 17 Sep. The discovery of the northward movement through the Philippines is discussed in *Sea Swallow* 41:61. Where do they winter?

**Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*.** In the Caribbean area reports from AHT included "several hundred" in a large feeding flock with Common Noddies. Brown and Red-footed Boobies at 12°N 62.5°W NNW of Grenada on 12 Jun'92 and "several hundred" at 18.9°N 63.3°W on 29 Jun'92.

**Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*.** HMSN reported 100+ adults in breeding plumage just outside and inside Alexandria harbour on 1 Jun'92. MGW reported 150+ feeding around his vessel at anchor on Osaka Bay off Kobe on 4 Jun'92.

**Swift Tern *Sterna bergii*.** BE saw three at Marjan Oilfield, Persian Gulf, on 20 Feb'92.

**Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*.** A feeding flock of 20 was described by PKF at 7.1°N 13.1°W off Sierra Leone on 28 Jan'92.

**Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*.** BE reported a large feeding flock off Ras Tanura on 2 Mar'92, five there on 6 Mar and three on 14 Mar.

**Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*.** A large feeding flock was reported by BE off Ras Tanura on 2 Mar'92 and also one there on 14 Mar.

## AUKS ALCIDAE

**Brunnich's Guillemot *Uria lomvia*.** MGW saw two at 54°N 177°W near Adak I. Bering Sea on 2 Mar'92 and 14 at 53°N 168°W on 24 Apr'92.

**Guillemot *Uria aalge*.** Two at 54°N 161.5°W on 18 May'92 and 15 at 54°N 176.3°E off Buldir I. in Bering Sea, on 30 May'92.

**Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus columba*.** MGW saw 150+ at 54.5°N 165°W in Unimak Pass on 19 Mar'92.

**Kittlitz's Murrelet *Brachyrhamphus brevirostris*.** MGW tentatively identified four at 54.5°N 165°W Unimak Pass on 19 Mar'92. On 30

May in calm weather, MGW encountered vast numbers of Alcids in a multi-species feeding flock containing Parakeet and Least Auklets, Crested or Whiskered Auklets, and Kittlitz's Murrelet at 54°N 176.3°E 25 miles off Buldir I. (Bering Sea).

**Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus*.** Four were described by MGW from 54°N 161.5°W on 18 May'92.

**Crested Auklet *Aethia cristatella*.** MGF found an immature on deck after hurricane force winds the previous day at 45.9°N 151.9°E in the western N. Pacific on 9 Dec. '91.

**Whiskered Auklet *Aethia pygmaea*.** Two probable reports from MGW of 20+ at 45.3°N 150.4°E and 100+ at 44.3°N 149.2°E western N. Pacific on 24 Mar'92.

**Horned Puffin *Fratercula corniculata*.** One was seen well by MGW carrying three fish in its bill at 53.7°N 148°W on 19 May'92. He also saw 12 at 54°N 176.3°E Bering Sea on 30 May'92.

**Tufted Puffin *Lunda cirrhata*.** Reports by MGW during 1992 from the Bering Sea and central/eastern N. Pacific included one in breeding plumage at 53°N 168°W on 24 Apr, five the next day at 48.9°N 179.1°W, 15 at 54°N 161.5°W on 18 May, one at 53.7°N 148°W on 20 May, 17 at 54°N 156°W on 27 May'92 in two hours at 54°N 180°E on 29 May, and 29 at 54°N 176.3°E the following day.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## RNBWS CHECKLIST OF SEABIRDS

by Dr W.R.P. Bourne and Commander M.B. Casement, RN

The classification and nomenclature of seabirds presents particular problems because, owing to their wide distribution and often elusive character, they are dealt with inconsistently by many conflicting national and international authorities. The RNBWS has therefore been accustomed, since its formation in 1946, to follow what was for a long time the only international authority - the first of all field-guides, the late W.B. Alexander's *Birds of the Ocean* (Putnam, New York, 1928), compiled by an author with a wide knowledge of the birds in Europe and Australasia, after consultation with the leading American authority R.C. Murphy. (*Ibis* 116: 232-233. 1972).

Unfortunately, while this list was revised in the second edition in 1955 and its successor *A Field Guide to the Seabirds* (Collins, London) by our former Chairman the late Captain Gerald Tuck in 1978, a variety of often entirely new and not always well-advised alternative names, which disregard established usage for seabirds, have also been devised in the course of attempts to rationalise the nomenclature of American landbirds, and more recently also in Britain. It therefore seemed wise to record our own preferences.

This is therefore a provisional list indicating the names we prefer for all seabird species currently recognised, and those races identifiable at sea, with their scientific names; also important references for any revisions of their classification not given by Charles Sibley and Burt Monroe in their recent *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world* (Yale University Press, 1990 - see review in *Sea Swallow* 40: 64-67). But, whereas when they use trinomials (with the middle name in brackets) to imply that the form might be treated as a distinct species in a superspecies, we normally indicate that it might be treated as a race of the species. An attempt has also been made to simplify the vernacular names, which have often become much too clumsy for frequent use at sea, and we have included the better-established vernacular names for races identifiable at sea.

The species are listed in a conventional order, except where forms which now appear to be related have been brought closer together. In order to retain the traditional groups of seabirds, while conforming to changing views of their relationship, we are downgrading some traditional families to subfamilies, eg *Pelecanoidinae* or *Sterninae*. These changes are implemented here for the first time in Neil Cheshire's seabird analysis (see pp5-15). The alternative vernacular names preferred are normally given first.

### KEY

**bold** type = vernacular names we propose to use in *Sea Swallow*

( . . . ) = debatable proposals

? = more novel and less acceptable proposals

We would be grateful for comments before producing a definitive list.

## LOONS OR DIVERS *Gaviidae*

There is an impasse between the modern British vernacular name "diver", and the older English name "loon" (probably derived from the Scandinavian "lom"), which is still used in America. The situation seems worst with the Black-throated Diver or Arctic Loon *Gavia arctica*, which is neither the only form with a black throat nor particularly characteristic of the arctic, having a rather southerly distribution. Since they all have simpler loon names it might be better to follow the usage in America? But, for use in *Sea Swallow*, we have no strong views, since these species rarely appear in our reports.

*Gavia stellata*. Red-throated Loon or Diver.

*Gavia arctica*. Arctic Loon or Black-throated Diver.

*Gavia (arctica?) pacifica*. Pacific Loon.

*Gavia immer*. Common Loon or Great Northern Diver.

*Gavia adamsii*. Yellow-billed Loon or White-billed Diver.

## PENGUINS *Spheniscidae*

The most debatable issue appear to be the extent to which the crested penguins, like some other birds of the sub-antarctic islands such as the king shags and great skuas, should be treated as races of the same species; it is for example inconsistent to treat the Indo-Atlantic Rockhoppers, which differ in appearance and behaviour (P. Jouventin, *Advances in Ethology* 24: 24: 1-149) as one species, and similar New Zealand forms as several.

*Aptenodytes patagonicus*. King Penguin.

*Aptenodytes forsteri*. Emperor Penguin.

*Pygoscelis papua*. Gentoo Penguin.

*Pygoscelis adeliae*. Adélie Penguin.

*Pygoscelis antarctica*. Chinstrap, Bearded or Ringed Penguin.

*Eudyptes pachyrhynchos*. Fiordland (Crested?) or Victoria Penguin.

*Eudyptes robustus*. Snares' (Crested?) Penguin

*Eudyptes sclateri*. Erect- or Big-crested Penguin.

*Eudyptes (c.) chrysocome*. (Southern) Rockhopper Penguin

(*Eudyptes (chrysocome) moseleyi*. (Northern) Rockhopper Penguin?)

*Eudyptes (c.) chrysolophus*. Macaroni Penguin.

*Eudyptes (chrysolophus?) schlegeli*. Royal Penguin.

*Megadyptes antipodes*. Yellow-eyed Penguin.

*Eudyptula minor*. Little, Fairy, Blue or White-flippered Penguin.

*Spheniscus demersus*. Jackass or African Penguin.

*Spheniscus magellanicus*. Magellanic Penguin.

*Spheniscus humboldti*. Humboldt Penguin.

*Spheniscus mendiculus*. Galápagos Penguin.

## ALBATROSSES *Diomedeidae*

The usage for the Tubinares adopted by C. Jouanin and J.-P. Mougin in the second edition of Vol. 1 of Peter's *Birds of the World* (1979), largely followed by John Warham in *The Petrels* (Academic Press, London, 1990), seems preferable. The small southern albatrosses with black backs and white bodies are sometimes also called "mollymawks", a useful general and collective name originally applied to the Northern Fulmar, while the current vernacular nomenclature for the genus

*Phoebetria* surely needs simplifying? The southern species have a number of well-marked races which are identifiable at sea, and also need names, while it is debatable whether the extreme forms of the Wandering Albatross (*Gersfaut* 79:105-116; *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 112: 74-81) and Shy Albatross should be treated as separate species. Names given to well-marked races, treated by some as species, are indicated by "(this form)".

*Diomedea (e.) exulans*. **Wandering** and (this race) **Snowy Albatross**  
(*Diomedea (exulans) dabbenena* (This form) **Gough Albatross.**)  
(*Diomedea (exulans) antipodensis*. **Antipodes Albatross.**)  
(*Diomedea (exulans) amsterdamsis*. (This form) **Amsterdam Albatross.**)

*Diomedea (e.) epomophora*. **(Southern) Royal Albatross**  
(*Diomedea (epomophora) sandfordi*. (Northern) **Royal Albatross.**)

*Diomedea irrorata*. **Waved** or **Galapagos Albatross**.

*Diomedea albatrus*. **Steller's** or **Short-tailed Albatross**.

*Diomedea nigripes*. **Black-footed Albatross**.

*Diomedea immutabilis*. **Laysan Albatross**.

*Diomedea melanophris*. **Black-browed Albatross**.

*Diomedea (c.) cauta*. **Shy** or (this race) **White-capped Albatross**.

(*Diomedea (cauta) salvini*. (This form) **Salvin's Albatross.**)

(*Diomedea (cauta) cremita*. (This form) **Chatham (Island?) Albatross.**)

*Diomedea (c.) chlororhynchos*. (Western) **Yellow-nosed Albatross**.

(*Diomedea (chlororhynchos) bassi*. (Eastern) **Yellow-nosed Albatross.**)

*Diomedea chrysostoma*. **Grey-headed Albatross**.

*Diomedea bulleri*. **Buller's Albatross**.

*Phoebetria fusca*. (Dark-mantled?) **Sooty Albatross**.

*Phoebetria palpebrata*. **Light-mantled (Sooty?) Albatross**.

### FULMARS *Fulmarinae*

The fulmars are aerial petrels with stout, ridged or grooved bills used for sieving plankton, catching squid and scavenging. While the distribution of feather-lice and twisted guts in the gadfly petrels *Pterodroma* have been used as taxonomic characters, they could be due to cross-infestation and local variation in the diet respectively; though the Kerguelen Petrel has a large eye among other features justifying a separate genus. The large and small Snow Petrels interbreed freely (*Jouventin & Viot, Ibis* 127: 430-441); *Pachyptila macgillivrayi* seems intermediate between *P. vittata* and *P. salvini*, and the first gadfly petrel caught in the Azores intermediate between *P. feae* and *P. cahow* (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 111: 183-186). The Southern Giant Petrel is not confined to the Antarctic; the northern one was not described by Hall; the name Antarctic Fulmar leads to confusion with the Antarctic Petrel; John MacGillivray had no connection with the petrel named after him; the names Schlegel's and Madeira Petrel and Freira have each been used for two species; and all the medium-sized petrels were once called "pintadoes" collectively, so these names may be better avoided?

*Macronectes giganteus*. **Southern** or **Antarctic Giant Petrel** or **Fulmar**.

*Macronectes halli*. **Northern** or **Hall's Giant Petrel** or **Fulmar**.

*Fulmarus glacialis*. **Northern Fulmar**.

*Fulmarus glacialisoides*. **Southern** or **Antarctic Fulmar** or **Silver-grey Petrel**.

*Thalassoica antarctica*. **Antarctic Petrel**.  
*Daption capense*. **Cape Petrel**, or Pigeon, or Pintado Petrel.  
*Pagodroma (n.) nivea*. (Lesser?) **Snow Petrel**.  
(*Pagodroma (nivea) confusa*. Greater Snow Petrel?).  
*Lugensa brevirostris*. **Kerguelen Petrel**.  
*Pachyptila (v.) vittata*. **Broad-billed Prion**.  
*Pachyptila (vittata?) salvini*. Salvin's or Medium-billed Prion.  
*Pachyptila desolata*. **Antarctic or Dove Prion**.  
*Pachyptila belcheri*. Narrow-, Thin- or Slender-billed Prion.  
*Pachyptila turtur*. **Fairy Prion**.  
*Pachyptila crassirostris*. **Fulmar Prion**.  
*Halobaena caerulea*. **Blue Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma (r.) rostrata*. **Tahiti Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma (a./rostrata?) aterrima*. **Mascarene or Réunion Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma (aterrima/rostrata?) becki*. **Beck's Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma macgillivrayi*. **Fiji or MacGillivray's Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma neglecta*. **Kermadec or Schlegel's Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma arminjoniana*. **Herald**, Trindade (sic), or South Trinidad Petrel.  
*Pterodroma alba*. **Phoenix Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma (m.) macroptera*. **Great-winged Petrel**.  
(*Pterodrom macroptera gouldi*. (This race) **Grey-faced Petrel**.)  
*Pterodroma lessonii*. **White-headed Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma incerta*. **Atlantic, Hooded or Schlegel's Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma solandri*. **Providence or Solander's Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma magentae*. **Magenta Petrel** or (Chatham Island?) **Taiko**.  
*Pterodroma ultima*. **Murphy's Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma inexpectata*. **Mottled Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma axillaris*. **Chatham (Island?) Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma nigripennis*. **Black-winged Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma hypoleuca*. **Bonin Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma (feae?) cahow*. **Bermuda Petrel**, or Cahow.  
*Pterodroma (f.) feae*. Fea's or Cape Verde Petrel, Gon-gon, or Freira.  
*Pterodroma (feae?) madeirae*. Zino's or Madeira Petrel, or Freira.  
*Pterodroma mollis*. **Soft-plumaged Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma (h.) hasitata*. Capped or Black-capped Petrel, or Diablotin.  
(*P. (hasitata) caribbaca*. Jamaica Petrel, or Blue Mountain Duck.)  
*Pterodroma phaeopygia*. **Dark-rumped Petrel**.  
*Pterodroma (e.) externa*. Juan Fernández Petrel.  
(*Pterodroma (externa?) cervicalis*. White-necked Petrel.)  
*Pterodroma (externa?) barauai*. Barau's Petrel.  
*Pterodroma (c.) cookii*. Cook's Petrel.  
*Pterodroma (cookii?) defilippiana*. Defilippe's Petrel.  
*Pterodroma (l.) leucoptera*. **Gould's Petrel?**  
(*Pterodroma (leucoptera) brevipes*. Collared Petrel?)  
*Pterodroma (l.) longirostris*. Stejneger's Petrel.  
(*Pterodroma (longirostris) pycrofti*. Pycroft's Petrel?)  
*Bulweria bulwerii*. **Bulwer's Petrel**.  
*Bulweria fallax*. Jouanin's Petrel.

## SHEARWATERS *Procellariinae*

The shearwaters are more aquatic petrels with long smooth bills, which often catch fish by diving. *Calonectris diomedea edwardsi* merely shows an extreme form of geographical variation of *C. diomedea* (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 106: 163-170), and *Puffinus newelli* is now also usually combined with at least *P. auricularis* (J. Jehl, *Gerfaut* 72: 121-135) if not also *P. puffinus*; whereas *P. yelkouan* differs from them but resembles *P. opisthomelas* (*Brit. Birds* 81: 306-319). The "Persian Shearwater" *P. persicus* is a poorly-defined race of *P. lherminieri* (Phillips & Sims, *Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 55: 195-207), but *P. heinrothi*, which has, among other features, a long slender bill, seems more distinct. The names Black Petrel, and Mediterranean and Pale-footed Shearwater, have each been applied to at least two forms, and may be better avoided?

*Procellaria cinerea*. Grey or Brown Petrel or Pediunker.

*Procelleria* (a.) *aequinoctialis*. White-chinned Petrel. Cape Hen or Shoemaker.

*Procellaria* (*aequinoctialis*?) *conspicillata*. Spectacled Petrel or Shoemaker, or White-eye.

*Procellaria parkinsoni*. Parkinson's or Black Petrel.

*Procellaria westlandica*. Westland (Black?) Petrel.

*Calonectris leucomelas*. Streaked or White-faced Shearwater.

*Calonectris* (d.) *diomedea*. Cory's. Cinereous or Mediterranean Shearwater.

*Calonectris* (*diomedea*) *edwardsi*. (This form) Cape Verde Shearwater.

*Puffinus pacificus*. Wedge-tailed Shearwater.

*Puffinus bulleri*. Buller's. Grey-backed or New Zealand Shearwater.

*Puffinus carneipes*. Flesh- or Pale-footed Shearwater.

(*Puffinus* (*carneipes*) *creatopus*. Pink- or Pale-footed Shearwater.)

*Puffinus gravis*. Great(er?) Shearwater.

*Puffinus griseus*. Sooty Shearwater

*Puffinus tenuirostris*. Short-tailed or Slender-billed Shearwater.

*Puffinus nativitatis*. Christmas (Island?) Shearwater.

*Puffinus* (p.) *puffinus*. Manx Shearwater.

(*Puffinus* (*puffinus/a.*) *auricularis*. Townsend's Shearwater?).

(*Puffinus* (*puffinus/auricularis*) *newelli*. Newell's Shearwater?)

*Puffinus* (y.) *yelkouan*. Yelkouan, Mediterranean or (this form) Levantine Shearwater.

(*Puffinus* (*yelkouan*) *mauretanicus*. This form, Balearic Shearwater?).

(*Puffinus* (*yelkouan*) *opisthomelas*. This form, Black-vented Shearwater?)

*Puffinus* (g.) *gavia*. Fluttering Shearwater.

*Puffinus* (*gavia*?) *huttoni*. Hutton's Shearwater.

*Puffinus assimilis*. Little Shearwater.

*Puffinus lherminieri*. Audubon's or Persian Shearwater.

*Puffinus* (*lherminieri*?) *heinrothi*. Heinroth's Shearwater.

## DIVING-PETRELS *Pelecanoidinae*

*Pelecanoides garnoti*. Peruvian Diving-petrel.

*Pelecanoides magellani*. Magellan(ic?) Diving-petrel.

*Pelecanoides georgicus*. (South?) Georgian Diving-petrel.

*Pelecanoides urinator*. Common or Sub-antarctic Diving-petrel.

## STORM-PETREL *Hydrobatidae*

Although these are sometimes called "petrel" alone, this often causes confusion with the larger species. They were originally all called "Storm-Petrel" (and *Hydrobates pelagicus* Common Storm-Petrel) by MacGillivray in his *History of British Birds* in 1852. Storm-petrel, with or without capitals and/or a hyphen, is now usually used for the whole family outside Britain. Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *O. monorhis* is now known to differ in its DNA sequences from *O. leucomelas* (Cubitt, Dawson *et al.* *Birding World* 5: 438-444), and the Striped Storm-petrel *F. lineata* and Samoan Storm-petrel *N. moestissima* are morphs of *F. tropica* and *N. fuliginosa* respectively (Murphy & Snyder, *Amer. Mus. Novit.* 1596). Sooty Storm-petrel has been used for several species, and seems best avoided.

*Oceanites oceanicus*. Wilson's Storm-petrel.

*Oceanites gracilis*. Elliot's or White-vented Storm-Petrel.

*Garrodia nereis*. Grey-backed Storm-petrel.

*Pelagodroma marina*. White-faced Storm-petrel.

*Fregetta grallaria*. White-bellied Storm-petrel.

*Fregetta tropica*. Black-bellied Storm-petrel.

*Nesofregata fuliginosa*. White-throated, Sooty, Samoan or Polynesian Storm-petrel.

*Hydrobates pelagicus*. British, Common or European Storm-petrel.

*Halocyptena microsoma*. Least Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma tethys*. Galapagos or Wedge-rumped Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma castro*. Madeiran, Harcourt's or Band-rumped Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma leucomelas*. Leach's Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma monorhis*. Swinhoe's Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma tristrami*. Tristram's or Sooty Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma markhami*. Markham's Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma matsudairae*. Matsudaira's Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma malania*. Black Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma macrodactyla*. Guadalupe Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma homochroa*. Ashy Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma hornbyi*. Hornby's or Ringed Storm-petrel.

*Oceanodroma furcata*. Fork-tailed Storm-petrel.

## TROPICBIRDS *Phaethontidae*

Both the Red-billed and Red-tailed Tropicbirds have red bills, and both the Red-billed and White-tailed Tropicbirds have whitish tails. Luckily there is a more distinctive old name Yellow-billed Tropicbird for the last.

*Phaethon aethereus*. Red-billed Tropicbird.

*Phaethon rubricauda*. Red-tailed Tropicbird.

*Phaethon lepturus*. Yellow-billed or White-tailed Tropicbird.

## PELICANS *Pelecanidae*

*Pelecanus onocrotalus*. Eastern or Great White Pelican.

*Pelecanus rufescens*. Pink-backed Pelican.

*Pelecanus crispus*. Dalmatian Pelican.

*Pelecanus (crispus?) philippensis*. **Spot-billed or Grey Pelican.**  
*Pelecanus conspicillatus*. **Australian Pelican.**  
*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*. **American White Pelican.**  
*Pelecanus occidentalis*. **Brown Pelican.**  
*Pelecanus thagus*. **Peruvian or Chilean Pelican .**

### GANNETS AND BOOBIES *Sulidae*

*Papasula abbotti*. **Abbott's Booby.**  
*Morus (b?) bassanus*. **Northern Gannet.**  
*Morus (bassanus?) capensis* **Cape Gannet.**  
*Morus (bassanus?) serrator*. **Austral(as)ian Gannet.**  
*Sula nebouxii*. **Blue-footed Booby.**  
*Sula variegata*. **Peruvian Booby.**  
*Sula dactylatra*. **Masked or Blue-faced Booby.**  
*Sula leucogaster*. **Brown Booby.**  
*Sula sula*. **Red-footed Booby.**

### CORMORANTS AND SHAGS *Phalacrocoracidae*

Currently these species often appear to have been arranged, and the names "cormorant" and "shag" allocated between them, at random. They appear divisible into several groups (D. Siegel-Causey, *Condor* 90: 885-905): the most distinct, large *Phalacrocorax* and small *Microcarbo* in enclosed waters, which might be called the "true" and "pygmy cormorants"; large *Leucocarbo* and small *Stictocarbo* at sea, which might be called the "king" and "true shags" respectively, are given generic status below. Among various other modifications, Douglas Siegel-Causey has also recently described a new species, Kenyon's Shag, from Amchitka Island, Alaska (*Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist. Occas. Pa.* 140: 1-17, 1991); and M. R. Browning has shown that the name *Phalacrocorax brasiliensis* has priority over *P. olivaceus* for the Olivaceous Cormorant (*Wilson Bull.* 101: 101-106.)

*Phalacrocorax (c.) carbo*. **Great or Common Cormorant or Black Shag.**  
*Phalacrocorax (carbo?) lucidus*. **White-breasted Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax perspicillatus*. **Pallas's Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax capillatus*. **Japanese Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax auritus*. **Double-crested Cormorant**  
*Phalacrocorax basiliensis*. **Olivaceous, Neotropic or Biguá Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*. **Brandt's Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax harrisi*. **Flightless or Galapagos Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*. **Indian Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax varius*. **Pied Cormorant or Shag.**  
*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*. **Black-faced Cormorant.**  
*Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*. **Little Black Cormorant or Shag.**  
*Phalacrocorax neglectus*. **Bank Cormorant.**  
*(Microcarbo) pygmaeus*. **Pygmy Cormorant.**  
*(Microcarbo) niger* **Javanese Cormorant.**  
*(Microcarbo) melanoleucus*. **Little Pied Cormorant or Shag.**  
*(Microcarbo) africanus*. **Reed or Long-tailed Cormorant.**  
*(Microcarbo) coronatus*. **Crowned Cormorant.**  
*(Leucocarbo) (c.) carunculatus*. **New Zealand (King?) or Rough-faced Shag or Cormorant.**

((*Leucocarbo*) (*carunculatus*) *chalconotus*. **Stewart** (Island?) or **Bronze Shag**.)  
((*Leucocarbo*) (*carunculatus*) *onslowi*. **Chatham** (Island?) **Shag**.)  
((*Leucocarbo*) *campbelli*. **Campbell** (Island?) **Shag**.  
((*Leucocarbo*) *colensoi*. **Auckland** (Island?) **Shag**.  
((*Leucocarbo*) *ranfurlyi*. **Bounty**. (Island?) **Shag**.  
((*Leucocarbo*) (*a.*) *atriceps*. **Imperial** or **Blue-eyed Shag**.  
((*Leucocarbo*) (*atriceps*) *albiventer*. **Imperial** or (this form) **King Shag** or **Cormorant**?)  
((*Leucocarbo*) (*atriceps*) *georgianus*. (South?) **Georgian Shag**?).  
((*Leucocarbo*) (*atriceps*?) *bransfieldensis*. **Antarctic Shag**.)  
((*Leucocarbo*) *verrucosus*. **Kerguelen** or **King Shag** or **Cormorant**.  
((*Leucocarbo*) *bougainvillii*. **Guanay Shag** or **Cormorant**?)  
((*Leucocarbo*) *capensis*. **Cape Shag** or **Cormorant**.  
((*Leucocarbo*) *nigrogularis*. **Socotra Shag** or **Cormorant**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) *aristotelis*. (**European Shag** or **Green Cormorant**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) *pelagicus*. **Pelagic Shag** or **Cormorant**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) *urile*. **Red-faced Shag** or **Cormorant**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) *kenyoni*. **Kenyon's Shag**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) *gaimardi*. **Red-legged Shag** or **Cormorant**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) *magellanicus*. **Rock** or **Magellan Shag** or **Cormorant**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) (*p.*) *punctatus*. **Spotted Shag**.  
((*Stictocarbo*) (*punctatus*) *leatherstoni*. **Pitt** (Island?) **Shag**).

#### FRIGATEBIRDS *Fregatidae*

*Fregata aquila*. **Ascension Frigatebird**.  
*Fregata andrewsi*. **Christmas Frigatebird**.  
*Fregata magnificens*. **Magnificent Frigatebird**.  
*Fregata minor*. **Great(er) Frigatgebird**.  
*Fregata ariel*. **Lesser Frigatebird**.

#### PHALAROPES *Phalaropodidae*

All the species become more or less grey in the winter, and the Red-necked Phalarope has not got a particularly northern distribution.  
*Phalaropus fulicarius*. **Red** or **Grey Phalarope**.  
*Phalaropus lobatus*. **Red-necked** or **Northern Phalarope**.  
*Steganopus unicolor*. **Wilson's Phalarope**. (Not normally found at sea.)

#### SHEATHBILLS *Chionidae*

Both are snowy, and it seems better to use more distinctive names.  
*Chionis alba*. **Yellow-billed**, **American** or **Snowy Sheathbill**.  
*Chionis minor*. **Black-billed** or **Lesser Sheathbill**.

#### SKUAS AND JAEGERS *Stercorariini*

There are a substantial number of differences between the larger and smaller species, and there is a good case for adopting the apt name "bonxie" (= old woman) for the former group, but there is no English collective term for the latter. Therefore it may be best to use the German name "jaeger" (= hunter), although it is not used for these birds in that language. The relationships of the larger forms are discussed by

P. Devillers in *Gerfaut* 68: 374-417. The "South Polar" Skua occurs nearly as close to the North Pole, and "Antarctic" Skua has been used for several forms, so perhaps these names might be better avoided?

*Catharacta (s.) skua*. **Great Skua** or Bonxie.

(*Catharacta (skua/a.) antarctica*. **Southern**, Antarctic or (this form) **Falkland Skua** or Bonxie?).

(*Catharacta (skua/antarctica) lonnbergi*. (This form) **Brown Skua** or Bonxie?).

*Catharacta (skua?) chilensis*. **Chilean Skua**, or Bonxie?

*Catharacta (skua?) maccormicki*. **McCormick's**, (South?) **Polar** or **Antarctic Skua** or Bonxie?

*Stercorarius pomarinus*. **Pomarine Skua** or Jaeger.

*Stercorarius parasiticus*. **Arctic Skua** or **Parasitic Jaeger**.

*Stercorarius longicaudua*. **Long-tailed Skua** or Jaeger.

### GULLS *Larinae*

The gulls also appear divisible into two main radiations: of large, more or less white-headed, and small, usually hooded forms - with many superspecies and aberrant derivations showing overlapping characters. Heuglin's Gull, including the form *vegaae* appears to be an eastern representative of the Lesser Black-backed Gull, which it meets without interbreeding around the White Sea (A. V. Filchagov *et al* *Zool. Zh.* 71(10): 148-152), but it may intergrade with the Armenian Gull to the south (*Summaries of conference papers for the Second Mediterranean Seabird Symposium*: 21-22). The Relict Gull and Great Black-headed Gull (*Forktail* 4: 77-87. 6: 35-67), Brown-headed, Grey-headed, Hartlaub's and Silver Gulls (*Sandgrouse* 12: 37-42), and Black-headed and Brown-hooded Gulls also appear closely related. The names Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gull and Great Black-headed Gull seem unduly cumbersome, and might be better shortened (the last was once aptly known as "The Great Gull")? The name "mew" was originally applied to all the smaller gulls combined, and may also be better avoided.

*Larus fuliginosus*. **Lava** or **Dusky Gull**.

*Larus modestus*. **Grey Gull**.

*Larus heermanni*. **Heermann's Gull**.

*Larus (b.) belcheri*. **Belcher's**, **Simeon** or **Band-tailed Gull**.

*Larus (belcheri?) atlanticus*. **Olrog's Gull**.

*Larus crassirostris*. **Japanese** or **Black-tailed Gull**.

*Larus audouini*. **Audouin's Gull**.

*Larus delawarensis*. **Ring-billed Gull**.

*Larus canus*. **Common** (or **Mew?**) **Gull**.

*Larus (f.) fuscus*. **Lesser Black-backed Gull?**.

*Larus (fuscus?) heuglini*. **Heuglin's Gull**.

(*Larus (fuscus/heuglini) armenicus*. **Armenian Gull?**).

*Larus (argentatus?) cachinnans*. **Yellow-legged** (Herring?) **Gull**.

*Larus argentatus*. **Herring Gull**.

*Larus (occidentalis?) glaucescens*. **Glaucous-winged Gull**.

*Larus (o.) occidentalis*. **Western Gull**.

*Larus (occidentalis?) livens*. **Yellow-footed Gull**.

*Larus californicus*. **Californian Gull**.

*Larus glaucopterus*. **Iceland Gull**.

(*Larus (glaucopterus) kumlieni*. (This form) **Kumlien's Gull?**).  
(*Larus (glaucopterus) thayeri*. (This form) **Thayer's Gull?**).  
*Larus hyperboreus*. **Glaucous Gull**.  
*Larus schistisagus*. **Slaty-backed Gull**.  
*Larus marinus*. **Great Black-back(ed Gull?)**.  
*Larus dominicanus*. **Kelp, Dominican or Southern Black-backed Gull**.  
*Larus pacificus*. **Pacific Gull**.  
*Larus scoresbii*. **Dolphin or Magellan Gull**.  
*Larus leucopterus*. **White-eyed Gull**.  
*Larus hemprichii*. **Sooty or Aden Gull**.  
*Larus atricilla*. **Laughing Gull**.  
*Larus pipixcan*. **Franklin's Gull**.  
*Larus serranus*. **Andean Gull**.  
*Larus ichthyaetus*. **Great (Black-headed) or Pallas's Gull**.  
*Larus relictus*. **Relict Gull**.  
*Larus melanocephalus*. **Mediterranean Gull**.  
*Larus brunneicephalus*. **Brown-headed Gull**.  
*Larus cirrocephalus*. **Grey-headed Gull**.  
*Larus (n.) novaehollandiae*. **Silver Gull**.  
(*Larus (novaehollandiae) hartlaubi*. **Hartlaub's Gull?**).  
(*Larus (novaehollandiae) scopulinus*. **Red-billed Gull?**).  
*Larus bulleri*. **Black-billed Gull**.  
*Larus (r.) ridibundus*. **Black-headed Gull**.  
*Larus (ridibundus) maculipennis*. **Brown-hooded Gull**.  
*Larus genei*. **Slender-billed Gull**.  
*Larus philadelphicus*. **Bonaparte's Gull**.  
*Larus saundersi*. **Saunders's Gull**.  
*Larus minutus*. **Little Gull**.  
*Larus sabini*. **Sabine's Gull**.  
*Rhodostethia rosea*. **Ross's Gull**.  
*Creagrus furcatus*. **Swallow-tailed Gull**.  
*Pagophila eburnea*. **Ivory Gull**.  
*Rissa tridactyla*. **(Black-legged) Kittiwake**.  
*Rissa brevirostris*. **Red-legged Kittiwake**.

#### TERNS *Sterninae*

The terns also appear divisible into a number of superspecies and aberrant forms, notably the marsh, crested, "comic", sooty and little terns, and noddies, including the White Tern. While the name Fairy Tern is sometimes used for the last, it seems better to keep it for *Sterna nereis*, which lacks another name. Although there are small White Terns breeding inland in the Marquesas, Holyoak & Thibault (*Alauda* 44: 453-473) did not propose to make them a separate species.

*Chlidonias hybridus*. **Whiskered Tern**.  
*Chlidonias leucopterus*. **White-winged (Black?) Tern**.  
*Chlidonias niger*. **Black Tern**.  
*Phaetusa simplex*. **Large-billed Tern**.  
*Gelochelidon nilotica*. **Gull-billed Tern**.  
*Sterna caspia*. **Caspian Tern**.  
*Sterna aurantia*. **(Indian?) River Tern**.  
*Sterna hirundinacea*. **South American Tern**.

*Sterna hirundo*. **Common Tern**.  
*Sterna paradisaea*. **Arctic Tern**.  
*Sterna vittata*. **Antarctic, Swallow-tailed or Wreathed Tern**.  
*Sterna virgata*. **Kerguelen Tern**.  
*Sterna forsteri*. **Forster's Tern**.  
*Sterna trudeaui*. **Trudeau's or Snowy-crowned Tern**.  
*Sterna dougallii*. **Roseate Tern**.  
*Sterna striata*. **White-fronted Tern**.  
*Sterna repressa*. **White-cheeked Tern**.  
*Sterna sumatrana*. **Black-naped Tern**.  
*Sterna acuticauda*. **Black-bellied Tern**.  
*Sterna albostriata*. **Black-fronted Tern**.  
*Sterna aleutica*. **Aleutian Tern**.  
*Sterna lunata*. **Spectacled or Grey-backed Tern**.  
*Sterna anaethetus*. **Bridled or Brown-winged Tern**.  
*Sterna fuscata*. **Sooty Tern**.  
*Sterna (a.) albifrons*. **Little Tern**.  
*Sterna (albifrons?) saundersi*. **Saunders' Tern**.  
*Sterna (albifrons?) antillarum*. **Least Tern**.  
*Sterna (albifrons?) superciliaris*. **Yellow-billed or Amazon Tern**.  
*Sterna (albifrons?) lorata*. **Peruvian or Chilean Tern**.  
*Sterna nereis*. **Fairy Tern**.  
*Sterna balaenarum*. **Damara Tern**.  
*Sterna bergii*. **Swift or (Greater?) Crested Tern**.  
*Sterna maxima*. **Royal Tern**.  
*Sterna bernsteini*. **Chinese (Crested?) Tern**.  
*Sterna elegans*. **Elegant Tern**.  
*Sterna bengalensis*. **Lesser Crested Tern**.  
*Sterna (s.) sandvicensis*. **Sandwich Tern**.  
(*Sterna (sandvicensis) eurygnatha*. **Cayenne Tern?**).  
*Larosterna inca*. **Inca Tern**.  
*Anous stolidus*. **Brown or Common Noddy**.  
*Anous (t.) tenuirostris*. **Lesser Noddy**.  
(*Anous (tenuirostris) minutus*. **Black or White-capped Noddy**).  
*Procelsterna (c.) cerulea*. **Blue-grey Noddy or Ternlet**.  
(*Procelsterna (cerulea) albivitta*. **Grey Noddy or Ternlet?**).  
*Gygis (a.) alba*. **White or Fairy Tern**.  
(*Gygis (alba) microrhyncha*. **Little White Tern?**).

#### SKIMMERS *Rhynchopinae*

*Rhynchops nigra*. **Black Skimmer**.  
*Rhynchops flavirostris*. **African Skimmer**.  
*Rhynchops albicollis*. **Indian Skimmer**.

#### ALCIDS *Alcidae*

A problem occurs with the use of the French name "guillemot" for the genus *Uria* in Britain, when the Americans still retain the old south-west English name "murre", presumably derived from the call, and everyone also uses guillemot for the distinct genus *Cephus*, known locally in northern Britain by the Scandinavian name "tystie". R.W. Storer has suggested that the simplest solution seems to be to eliminate

guillemot from the English language entirely (*Brit. Birds* 57:134, 436-439), though it seems unlikely to be adopted.

*Pinguinus impennis* Great Auk.

*Alca torda*. Razorbill.

*Alle alle*. Little Auk or Dovekie.

*Uria lomvia*. Brunnich's or Thick-billed Guillemot or Murre.

*Uria aalge*. (Common) Guillemot or Murre.

*Cephus grylle*. Black Guillemot or Tystie.

*Cephus columba*. Pigeon Guillemot or Tystie.

*Cephus carbo*. Spectacled Guillemot or Tystie.

*Brachyrhamphus marmoratus*. Marbled Murrelet.

*Brachyrhamphus brevirostris*. Kittlitz's Murrelet.

*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus* Xantus's Murrelet.

*Synthliboramphus craveri*. Craveri's Murrelet.

*Synthliboramphus antiquus*. Ancient Murrelet.

*Synthliboramphus wumizusume*. Japanese or Crested Murrelet.

*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*. Cassin's Auklet.

*Cyclorrhynchus psittacula*. Parakeet Auklet.

*Aethia cristatella*. Crested Auklet.

*Aethia pusilla*. Least Auklet.

*Aethia pygmaea*. Whiskered Auklet.

*Cerorhinca monocerata*. Rhinoceros Auklet.

*Fratercula arctica*. (Atlantic) Puffin.

*Fratercula corniculata*. Horned Puffin.

*Lunda cirrhata*. Tufted Puffin.

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Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis*, Southern Ocean  
(Australian sector) 52.1°N 152.6°E, 15 Mar'91  
Photo: Captain Neil Cheshire, MN

## An Atlas of Southern Hemisphere Albatrosses.

compiled by Dr W.L.N. Tickell

**Introduction.** The authors of an increasing number of seabird books illustrate species distributions by shading huge expanses of ocean while saying little if anything about the data and assumptions upon which their maps are based. This atlas tries to keep roughly within the constraints of observations.

In the late 1960s I was one of eight seabird workers who shared in bringing together at sea records for Antarctic Map Folio Series Number 14, published by the American Geographical Society (Watson *et al.* 1971). The four albatross maps included in that work have been the starting point for this atlas; although to save space, the sources cited in the Folio have not been listed here.

The adoption of  $5^\circ \times 5^\circ$  'squares' arose because the Folio maps were ruled at  $5^\circ$  intervals, but recently Barritt (1992) has argued for the effectiveness of the  $5^\circ$  squares in the Marsden reporting grid used by the Royal Navy. Although the areas are large, they are in keeping with the distances albatrosses are known to be capable of flying within a day or so (Kenyon & Rice 1958; Jouventin & Weimerskirch 1990).

Shaded squares are not measures of abundance; they may represent just one observation of a single bird at the fringe of its range, or many reports totalling thousands of albatrosses throughout the year.

The species included in the atlas comprise many separate populations and many classes that may be expected to have characteristic distributions not revealed by pooled data. Sub-specific names exist; but some remain contentious and at-sea reporting of them have been erratic, so for the purposes of this work, all records have been treated as species only.

Before Peter Harrison (1978) described the field characteristics of great albatrosses, many observations purporting to be of Wandering Albatrosses were taken at face value, when in fact, they may well have been Royals. It has not been possible in retrospect to define criteria for eliminating inadequate identifications and, next to throwing out most of the records of Wanderers from classic ocean voyages, they have been plotted with caution (Map 2).

The great albatross at Amsterdam Island may be one of several subspecies of Wandering Albatross (Bourne 1989) or a separate species (Jouventin & Roux 1983), but published reports have been too few to justify a separate map.

Until quite recently, very few Royal Albatrosses were identified at sea; only six of those plotted in the Folio were from a contemporary observer. The first compilation of Royal Albatross observations at sea published by Enticott (1986) is the basis for Map 3.

Black-browed Albatrosses are the most numerous and readily identified of the smaller (mollymawk) albatrosses in the southern hemisphere, but some Yellow-nosed and juvenile Grey-headed Albatrosses may have been confused with them (Tickell 1969). Buller's Albatrosses have almost certainly been under-represented due to misidentification as Grey-headed. Older Sooty Albatrosses and juveniles with

worn plumage are sometimes difficult to distinguish at sea from Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses (Harrison 1985) and they too may have been under-represented in observations. All names follow the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB) (Marchant & Higgins 1990). The *cauta* albatrosses may be species or sub-species; HANZAB has opted for the latter, but at sea almost all are reported as just Shy or White-capped Albatrosses.

Individuals of some southern albatrosses have been seen in the northern hemisphere, but whatever their significance, the maps in this atlas are bounded by the equator, and they have not been plotted; selected references have been cited on the maps.

The maps have been compiled by hand, and records incorporated up to 30 June 1992. I am aware of data that have not been available to me, and there must be records not known to me. Breeding locations have been indicated by numbered spots whose identity can be found in Table 1. Where observations have been exactly on a line of latitude or longitude the square shaded has been the one to the south or east, respectively.

The atlas has also been issued as loose sheets, to facilitate photocopying, and I hope that some will find their way into the hands of seafarers interested enough to write to me with further observations and comments for up-dating the plots.

### Acknowledgements

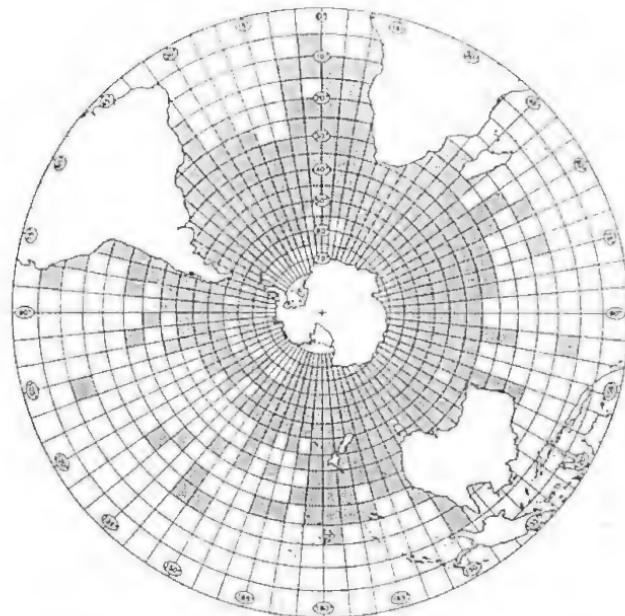
This atlas is dedicated to George Watson; it is a sequel to Antarctic Map Folio No. 14, and 21 years after its publication I still remember the enthusiasm with which he directed that enterprise from the Smithsonian Institution.

I have to thank the observers, whose names briefly identify thousands of records from many ships that have been incorporated in these maps. Most of them have contributed to the unique reporting scheme operated continuously by the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society (RNBWS) since the late 1940s; others are on the computer files where data of the First and Second International BIOMASS Experiments (FIBEX and SIBEX) of the early 1980s are stored; P. Trathan helped me immensely by supervising print-outs of information from that important database.

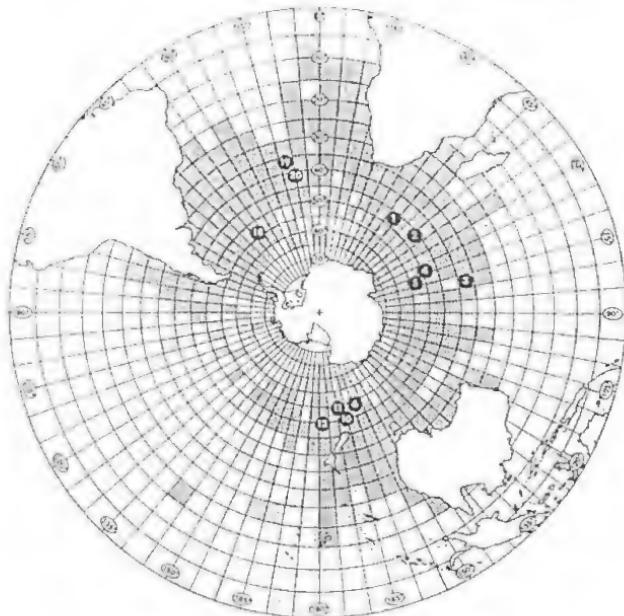
The Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme, Australian Antarctic Division, British Antarctic Survey (BAS), Centre d'Etude Biologiques de Chize, New South Wales Albatross Study group, Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, RNBWS, and the Bird Biology Sub-Committee of the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR) have all allowed access to unpublished data from their files.

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MAP 1 The Albatross Latitudes



All squares in which at least one albatross of any species has been reported.

MAP 2 Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

Lighter shading refers to earlier sightings where observations did not indicate awareness of Royal Albatrosses and therefore the possibility of misidentification; the darker areas are based upon reliable identifications, mostly made after 1978 and often substantiating earlier records. In 1963 a young Wanderer was seen in the northwest Atlantic off Portugal (RNBWS 1966).

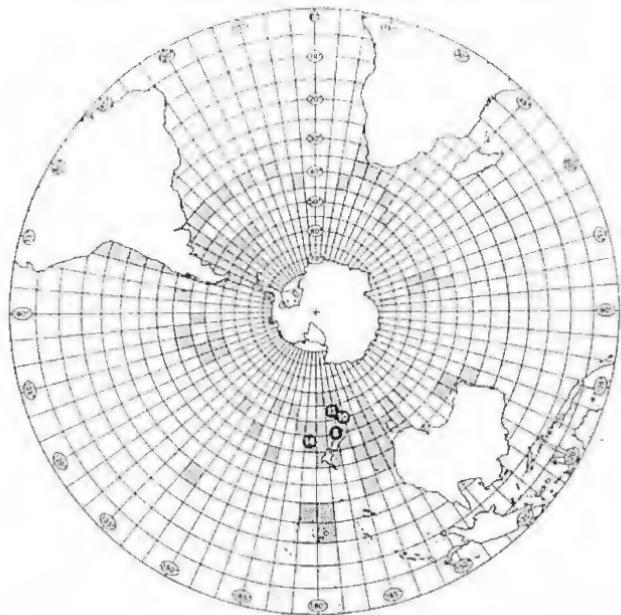
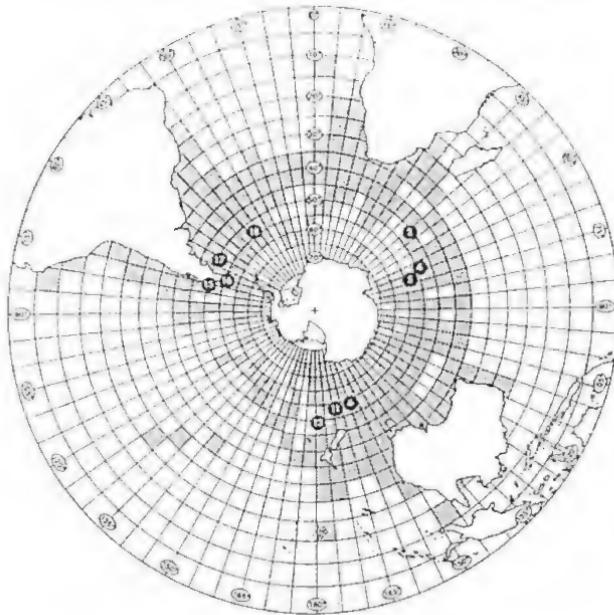
MAP 3 Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora*

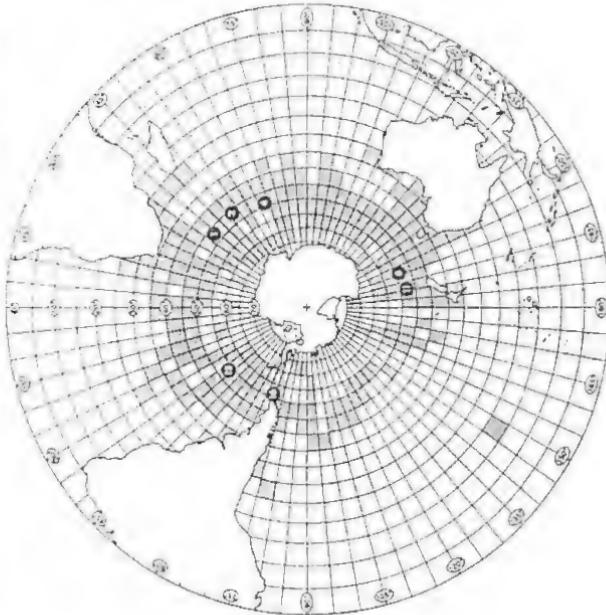
TABLE 1 Breeding locations of southern hemisphere albatrosses

1 Prince Edward I	6 Macquarie I.	11 Campbell I.	16 Diego Ramirez &
2 Crozet I.	7 Tasmanian offshore I.	12 Antipodes I.	Ildefonso I.
3 Amsterdam & S Paul I.	8 N.Z. & offshore I.	13 Bounty I.	17 Falkland I.
4 Kerguelen I.	9 Snares & Solander I.	14 Chatham I.	18 South Georgia.
5 Heard & McDonald I.	10 Aukland I.	15 Diego de Almagro I.	19 Tristan da Cunha.
			20 Gough I.

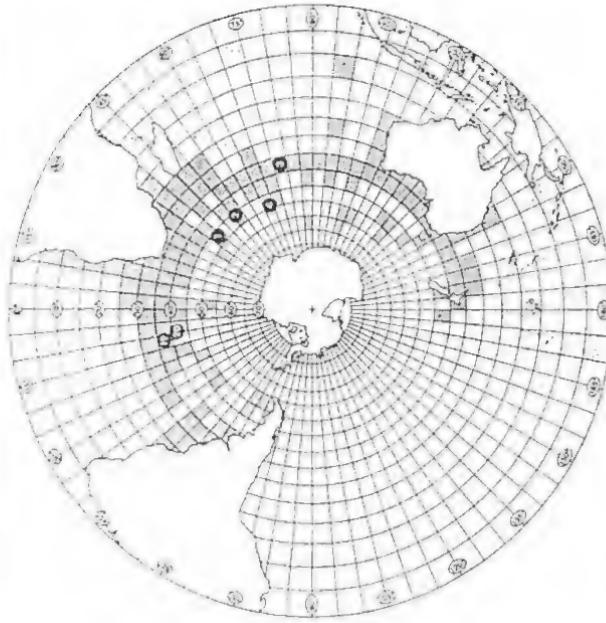
MAP 4 Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris*

Black-browed Albatrosses are seen from time to time in the North Atlantic, and two single birds are known to have taken up residence in separate Gannet colonies to which they returned each (northern) summer for many years (Anderson 1895; Hill 1987).

MAP 5 Grey-headed Albatross *Diomedea chrysostoma*

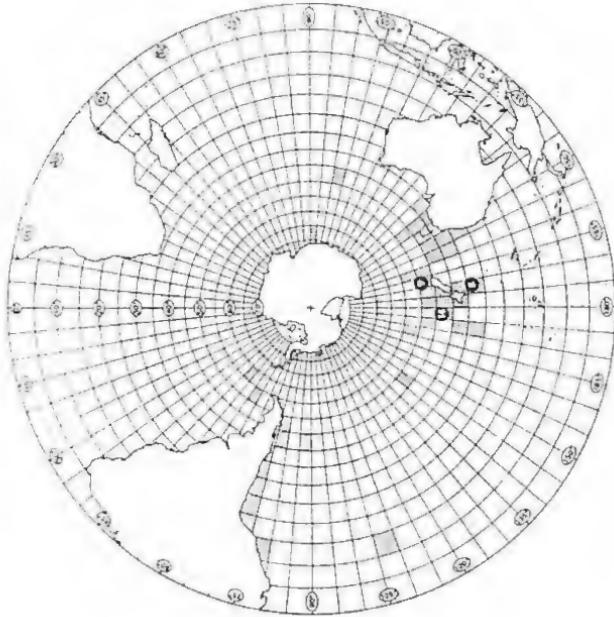


MAP 6 Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos*



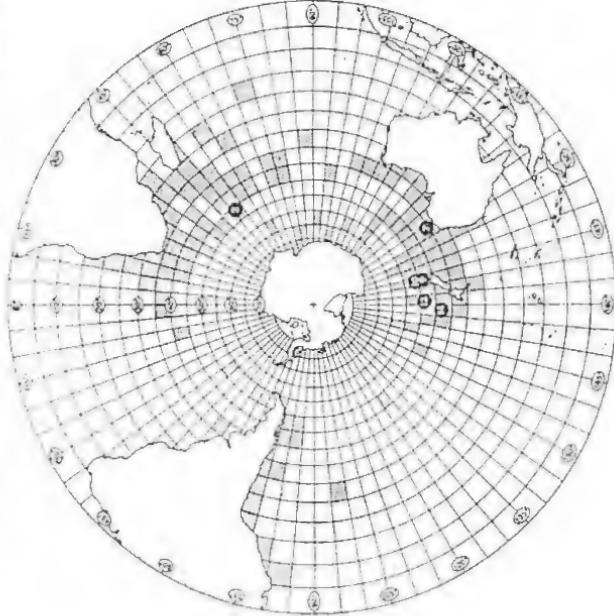
The presence of Yellow-nosed Albatrosses far south needs further confirmation; one report off the Antarctic Peninsula at  $64.6^{\circ}\text{S}$   $64.9^{\circ}\text{W}$  (TBEX 17.2.81) has not been plotted. There is one detailed description of a Yellow-nosed Albatross in the NE Atlantic Ocean (RNBWS 1987).

MAP 7 Buller's Albatross *Diomedea bulleri*



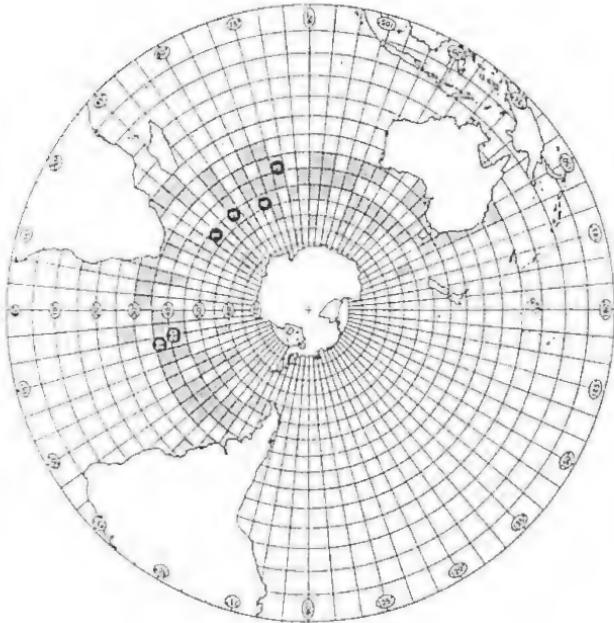
Sightings near the Antarctic are recent (Woehler *et al* 1990) and have been confirmed (Woehler pers. comm.).

MAP 8 Shy (White-capped) Albatross *Diomedea canta*

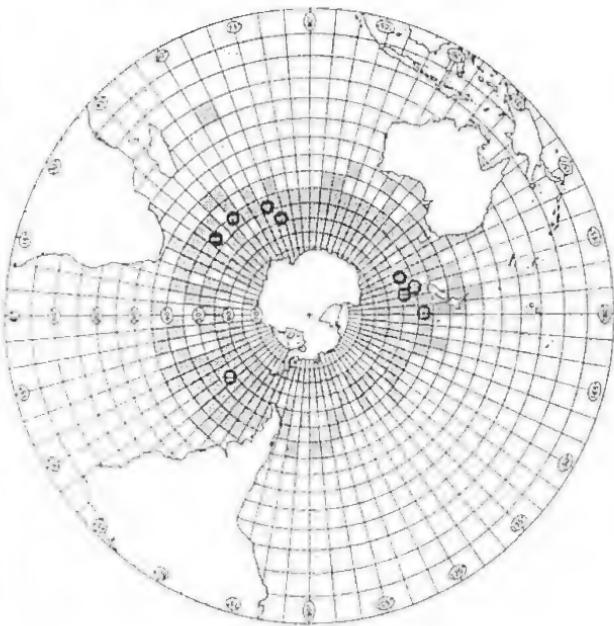


One bird temporarily ashore at South Georgia was banded and later found in a small colony at the Iles Crozet (Prince & Croxall 1983; Jouventin 1990). Shy Albatrosses have been reported from the Indian Ocean, off the African coast and as far north as Somalia and the Red Sea (Meech & Meth 1988).

MAP 9 Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca*



MAP 10 Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata*



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### Editor's Note

This atlas is published here, in its entirety, as a valuable reference source, but the maps may be too small for practical use by seagoing observers. A limited number of photocopies of the original maps, size A4, are available from the author, and also from me, at a cost of £2.00 per set please, to cover photocopying and postage. Further extra-limital records are discussed in *Ibis* 109:141-167, *American Birds* 28:578-603 and *Birding World* 5:382-390.

M.B.C.



Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea e. epomophora*,  
southern Tasman Sea 46.0°S 159.7°E, 9 Dec'88

Photo: Captain Neil Cheshire, MN

## MOVEMENTS AND INTERACTIONS OF WANDERING ALBATROSSES: THE ROLES OF SATELLITE TRACKING AND DIRECT OBSERVATIONS

by D.R. Briggs, P.A. Prince and J.P. Croxall

Until very recently, knowledge of the movements and at-sea distribution of Wandering Albatrosses *Diomedea exulans* came from recoveries and re-traps of birds, and from direct observations from ships at sea. From many years of such records, three main features became clear. First, that in the three to five years between fledging and their return to the natal site, juveniles range widely throughout all the southern oceans. Second, that adult birds, whether successful in rearing a chick (and therefore taking one complete year off) or unsuccessful (and often breeding again only six months later) make rapid, lengthy journeys to the west coast of Australia, where Atlantic and Indian Ocean breeders congregate in the non-breeding season (and, it is now known, are joined there by birds from the New Zealand sub-Antarctic islands). Third, because most populations of Wandering Albatrosses are sexually dimorphic in plumage, and lighten progressively with age, there were strong suggestions that, in general, males remain at higher latitudes than females and juveniles, whose distribution extends north well into the sub-tropics. Information on the whereabouts of breeding birds while engaged in breeding (whether incubating eggs or rearing chicks) was virtually non-existent, though the long incubation shifts and lengthy intervals between delivery of meals to the chick certainly offered an opportunity for wide-ranging foraging.

The need to know more about the pelagic distribution and abundance of Wandering Albatrosses, and about foraging areas in particular, has been greatly increased by recent data on their population trends. Data for South Georgia, Crozet and Macquarie Islands all show substantial population declines during the 1970s and early 1980s, with overall reductions of 30-40% of 1960 breeding numbers (Croxall *et al.* 1990, Weimerskirch & Jouventin 1978, Tomkins 1985). At Bird Island (South Georgia) we showed that, whilst both juvenile and adult mortality had increased, the latter was having a much more serious effect on the overall population trend. In particular, females were suffering nearly twice the mortality of males (Croxall *et al.* 1990).

The cause of the increased mortality was unclear at that stage, but a disproportionate number of the more recent recoveries had involved incidents connected with fishing vessels. More detailed data from recoveries obtained by Argentinian and Brazilian scientists showed that at least in September, significant numbers of South Georgia birds were killed in the long-line fisheries for tuna off the coast of northern Argentina/southern Brazil (Croxall & Prince 1990). However, that area is over 2,500km from South Georgia and it seemed more plausible that it could be an area where birds concentrated after breeding, rather than being typical of an area within the foraging range of breeding birds. At this time, the use of satellite transmitters was just becoming feasible, and our initial deployments of these were to examine the foraging range of birds rearing chicks in September. The satellite tags we used then

weighed 180g - less than 2% of the body mass of the Wandering Albatross. Attachment to the mid-dorsal feathers of the mantle, using impact adhesives, takes only a few minutes. While the intention is to recover the device before the battery is exhausted (about 30 days in the early models), should this be impossible, the whole device readily falls off during moult, if not before. Current devices weigh less than 50g, and deployment durations have been extended to some 3-4 months.

Our first study, obtaining an average of 15 fixes per day, showed that the female did indeed range further north than the male. Furthermore, not only did the female reach the critical area off Argentina/Brazil (Fig. 1) but it made the round trip of 6,500km at sufficient speed (minimum average 35km per hour) to spend two days in this area (Prince *et al.* 1992). On his longest trip (7,500km in 15 days), the male spent considerable time in Falkland Island waters (where there are squid and fin-fish trawling vessels but no long-liners) and in the Drake Passage

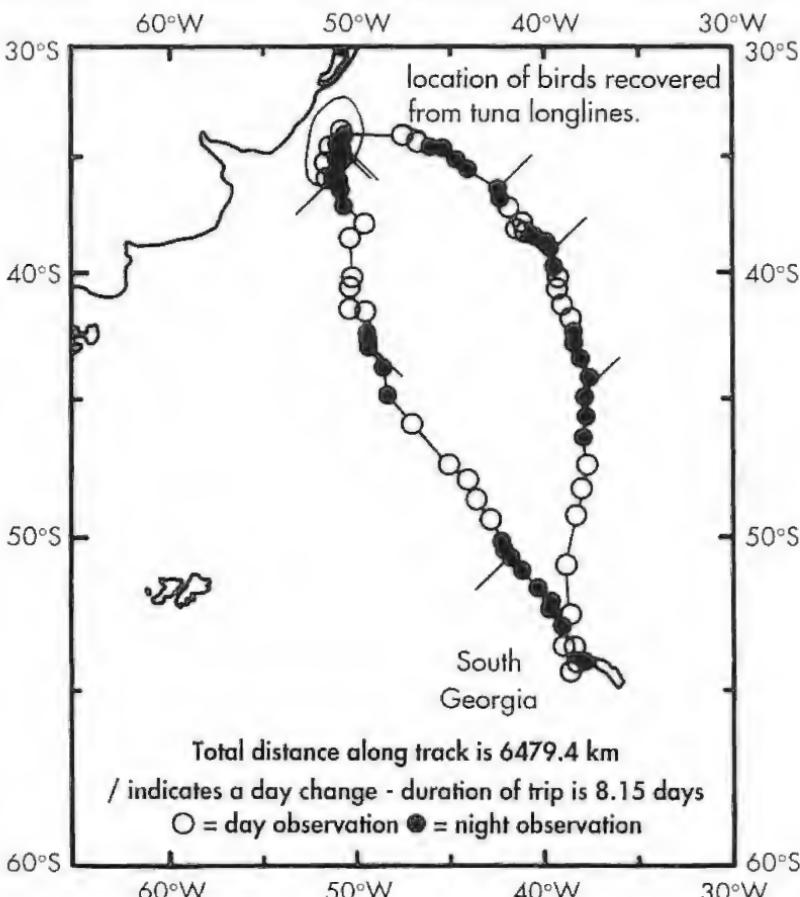


Fig. 1 Journey by female Wandering Albatross from South Georgia to an area of known long-line activity off the coast of southern Brazil.

off southern South America (including three days off Tierra del Fuego). These data support the idea that females are at an appreciably greater risk than males from incidental mortality associated with long-line fishing vessels.

At much the same time as this work, satellite telemetry studies by French scientists were showing in greater detail the travel speeds and distances covered by Indian Ocean Wandering Albatrosses (Jouventin & Weimerskirch, 1990). Also, off Australia, scientific observers on tuna long-line vessels were revealing the potential scale of albatross mortality (Brothers 1991). About 44,000 birds, including some 8,000 Wandering Albatrosses, could be being killed annually. The birds are caught when they try to remove bait (usually squid) from hooks, as these are propelled into the water over the stern of the vessel (Fig. 2). Each vessel may set 2,400-3,000 hooks per day (Brothers 1991). Given that Bird Island holds



Fig 2. X-ray of an albatross which has swallowed a long-line hook.  
(Reproduced by kind permission of Nigel Brothers.)

some 8% of the world Wandering Albatross population, this level of mortality would account for about half of all adult bird deaths, and is therefore by far the most likely cause of the population decline.

As if this was not serious enough, two additional problems were also being identified. First, off New Zealand, significant numbers of albatrosses were recorded as being killed by collisions with the monitor cables of fishing trawlers (Bartle 1991). Although net monitor cables are obsolescent (acoustic signals are used on modern vessels), such devices have been in use in the southern oceans since the 1970s, and are still standard in most vessels of countries that were part of the former Soviet Union. Within the zone bounded to the north by the Antarctic Polar Front, however, the use of such equipment will be illegal after 1995. Some countries, like New Zealand, have recently banned trawlers using monitor cables from fishing in territorial waters, because of the threat to albatross populations.

Second, long-line fisheries for Antarctic tooth-fish, have been developing near Wandering Albatross breeding sites in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans since the late 1980s. Despite initial claims that these deep water fisheries do not cause seabird deaths, increasing evidence is now available that they do (Prince *et al.* 1992). Furthermore, it is now known that such fisheries are widespread in coastal waters off southern South America (including Tierra del Fuego), important foraging grounds of many species of albatross and especially for Wandering and Royal Albatrosses. Little is known about these latter fisheries, and there is an urgent need to discover the kinds of seabirds associated with them, and the extent to which there is potential for incidental mortality.

**Records required.** Any records of the composition and aggregations of seabirds associated with long-line fishing vessels off South America, and especially data on interactions between birds and such fishing vessels, would be invaluable.

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## LANDBIRDS FROM SHIPS AT SEA

Analysis by Commander M.B. Casement, O.B.E., Royal Navy

The following landbird report sheets (numbers shown in brackets) were received during the last year. Extracts are shown in the appropriate geographical sections using the observer's initials. The notation BEH indicates 'Bird Examined in the Hand' form:

- 'Bridge Team' HMS Newcastle, 'Orient 92'. 14 May-18 Oct'92 (1).
- Captain N.G. Cheshire MN, RV *Franklin*. 17-21 Apr'92, Gulf of Carpentaria/Torres Strait (2).
- Petty Officer (MA) P.K. FitzPatrick RN, HMS *Active*. 20 May-29 Jun'92, S. Atlantic and W. Atlantic (1).
- Captain P.W. Jackson MN, MV *Aya*. 15-22 Oct'92, Tees to Barcelona (1).
- Chief Officer M.C. Littlewood MN, MT *London Spirit*. Multiple voyages off Gulf of California/NE Pacific. 24 Feb-11 May (6 pages computer print-out + 1 BEH); 31 Oct-2 Nov (5 pages computer print-out).
- Chief Officer A.R. Louch MN, RRS *Discovery*. 17 Sep-4 Nov Tenerife to Falklands via Capetown - N. and S. Atlantic (1 + 1 BEH).
- A.H. Todd, RFA *Grey Rover*. 19-27 May'92, Falklands to Barbados, S. Atlantic and W. Atlantic (1).
- Captain M.G. Weir MN, MV *OOCL Envoy*. 20-29 May'92, Yokohama to Vancouver - N. Pacific, Bering Sea (1).

The number of regular RNBWS observers sending in records this year (7), is again disappointing, and compares with 1991 (8), 1990 (8), 1989 (15) and 1988 (18). Another large batch of reports were received from Andy Webb and other members of the Seabirds at Sea Team (SAST) for the years 1991 (14) and 1992 (31). These covered observations in the North and Irish Seas, English Channel, Bristol Channel and the SW approaches (Celtic Sea), and were made aboard a wide variety of vessels, including HM ships *Jersey*, *Lindisfarne*, *Alderney* and *Leeds Castle*.

Also included are a wide range of interesting records from ships' Meteorological Logs, thanks to Captain M.L.M. (Mike) Coombs of the Met. Office, Bracknell, and to Captain P.W.G. (Peter) Chilman who handles the seabird records from this valuable source; these are indicated by the notation (Met). This analysis is presented in the same geographical sections (A to J) as in past years. Unusually, there are no records this year from the Persian Gulf (Section H).

### SECTION A - EAST ATLANTIC (EAST OF 30°W), BAY OF BISCAY and IBERLANT, also IRISH SEA, BRISTOL CHANNEL and CELTIC SEA

1989

On 11 Sep, MV *Nickerie* (Met) reported four probable Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* landed aboard at 0800 in position 40.5°N 13.2°W, 150nm west of Portugal. They looked tired, and were approachable to within 2m. Two disappeared after 30 mins, and the other two after 2 hours.

At dusk on 7 Oct, a large landbird several times attempted to land aboard in position 35.3°N 30.4°W, 220nm SW Azores. It remained with the ship for 15 minutes. The description of elongated neck and long black curved bill (6"), and mainly jet black colour suggest a probable Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*.

## 1990

On 21 Aug, M.V. *Isocardia* (Met) was in posn. 36.5°N 10.1°W, 75nm SW C. St.Vincent, wind NWxW/4, sky partly cloudy, good vis. About mid-morning the ship was invaded by numerous small birds, mainly small warblers, possibly Willow Warblers/Chiffchaffs *Phylloscopus* sp, also two Swallows *Hirundo rustica* aboard at noon. All had disappeared by dusk.

On 15 Sep, in posn. 39.3°N 18.1°W, 360nm west of C. St. Vincent, Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, an unidentified warbler sp. and a probable Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, also several birds seen flitting about ship, but not clearly seen. Wind NE/4.

On 16 Sep, a probable Shorteared Owl *Asio flammeus* sighted astern flying s'ly at about 200° at 37.3°N 10.9°W, 75nm west of C. St. Vincent. It circled once and continued south. Two Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* came aboard and remained until Mediterranean; also two probable "flava" wagtails sighted.

## 1991

During the period 27 Aug-1 Sep, A. Webb (SAST) recorded a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* and a Wheatear aboard on 27th, when 150nm SW Scillies (48.9°N 09.6°W), also a Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* on 31st, when 85nm SW Bishop Rk. (50.0°N 08.1°W). Two Sanderling *Calidris alba* were sighted heading east across Mounts Bay on 30 Aug, and single Turtle Doves on 29th and 30th, 80-50nm SW Scillies.

On 19 Oct, T. Barton (SAST) recorded pipits *Anthus* sp. (1+3), also Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* and Redwing *Turdus iliacus* close off Lands End, Cornwall; winds were N force 4.

On 29 Nov, C. Stone (SAST) recorded a Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* at 55.3°N 06.2°W, 10nm NE Rathlin I.

On 11 Dec, T. Barton (SAST) recorded a Song Thrush aboard briefly in the Bristol Channel, 30nm NW coast of Devon.

## 1992

On 16 Mar, MV *Maersk Cadet* (Met), on passage Med. to Gulf of Mexico, reported a Grey Heron (identified from an excellent sketch), landed aboard in position 33.5°N 24.2°W, 80nm west of Madeira, 200nm SSE Azores.

During the period 27 Mar to 14 Apr, C. Stone, (SAST) aboard RV *Circulana* (Met.) was off Falmouth and the SW approaches, saw the following species in the general area 49.8°N 11.01°W (120nm SSW C. Clear, Ireland): Wheatear (1), Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* (3) and Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus* (1). A Merlin *Falco columbarius* was aboard for one hour on 11th, when in St. Georges Channel, 10nm south of Saltee I. (51.6°N 06.6°W).

On 19 Apr, T. Barton (SAST) saw a Swallow in the Bristol Channel, 51.5°N 05.3°W (15nm SW Milford Haven). Two Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* came aboard at 1800: one stayed for 16 hrs, but the other died after two days. Two Sand Martins *Riparia riparia* were seen to depart east at 1010 on 20th, when 26nm of Hartland Pt: also a Grey Heron being mobbed by gulls. Further hirundines seen at 48.9°N 08.6°W, 100nm SW Scillies on 22nd, including two single Swallows and three House Martins *Delichon urbica*. Swallows were sighted 0930-1800 on 24th when close off Penzance, in groups of 5+4+1+5+4+1, mostly heading west; winds were SW3-4. A group of three heading NW were seen am on 25th, when 7nm north of Penzance.

On 20 Apr, a "kestrel" was reported aboard in position 35°N 55°W approx - 600nm south of Newfoundland. It caught and ate a small black bird. Description and behaviour suggests possibly a Merlin, and the prey was probably a storm-petrel *Hydrobatidae* sp.

On 3 May, a Whimbrel was photographed aboard SS *Queen Elizabeth 2* (Met.), in posn 32.6°N 14.3°W, (120nm east of Madeira), ship heading north at 30kts. It remained aboard for one hour - very tame but took neither food nor water offered.

On 6 May, C. Stone (SAST) recorded three single Swallows heading W in the Bristol Channel. During the period 12-18 May, she was aboard RRS *Challenger* operating in an area 170nm SW Scillies, 48.2°N 09.7°W, and recorded:

Swallow - singles on 12th, 13th and 18th.

House Martin - 12th (1), 16th (6), 18th (3) circling and settling briefly.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* - one aboard 17th, remained until 17th, when joined by another.

Turtle Dove - one aboard 18th.

Purple heron *Ardea purpurea* - one circling ship for over one hour on 13th.

Whimbrel - one heading east 1310 on 16th.

Winds were SE'ly 3-6.

During the periods 13/14 and 16-19 May, T. Barton (SAST) was in a similar area 20-120nm SW Scillies, aboard HMS Jersey and recorded:

Swallow - 12th (1+1), 13th (1), 14th (1+1), 16th (1)+1+2), 17th (1), 19th (1).

House Martin - singles on 13th and 16th.

Swift *Apus apus* - one heading NE on 16th.

Turtle Dove - singles aboard on 14th, 16th and 17th (+ one circling nearby fishing boat).

Whimbrel - one circled 1510 on 17th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* - flock of 25 in summer (breeding) plumage heading N 1540 on 16th, in posn. 49.7°N 06.8°W (15nm west of Bishop Rk.).

Warbler *Phylloscopus* sp. - one aboard briefly on 18th.

Rook/Crow *Corvus* sp. - one flying SW towards Scillies at 50.0°N 06.0°W at 1150 on 16th.

On 14 May, HMS Newcastle reported a Swift circling at 40.8°N 10.1°W, 60nm west of Oporto.

On 28 May, six adult House Martins alighted aboard at 49.3°N 06.9°W, 60nm SSW Scillies. A Curlew *Numenius arquata* landed aboard RV *Cirolana* at 50.3°N 12.3°W, 130nm SW C. Clear, Ireland, on 4 Jun.

On 9 Jun, T. Barton (SAST) recorded two single Collared Doves in the Bristol Channel, 30nm NW Cornish coast.

On 12 Jun, I. Gordon et al (SAST) saw a Swallow in St. George Channel (6nm NW St. David's Hd.) two more Swallows were seen on 15th, 25nm SW Milford Haven.

On 3 Jul, I. Gordon (SAST) saw a Swift at 49.5°N 09.1°W, 90nm WSW Scillies.

On 11 Sep, a "peregrine" was reported "hovering" over MV *Resolution Bay* (Met.), and settled aboard, when passing north of Flores and Corvo Is. (Azores). It flew past within 8 ft of observer. No description was given, but "hovering" strongly suggests probable Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*.

On 21 Sep, an unidentified "hawk" reported aboard MV *Coppename* (Met) at 48.6°N 17.5°W, 60nm north of Madeira, was most likely to have been a Merlin, but no description was given.

Between 1400-1530 on 30 Sep, T. Barton (SAST) saw a Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* heading NW in St. Georges Channel, 20nm SE Carnsore Pt., also groups of Swallows (10+5 heading SE). When close to land, further groups of 6+1+2 were seen heading west.

On 5 Oct, C. Stone (SAST) recorded three Swallows heading NE at 50.9°N 04.8°W, 60nm NNW Scillies.

On 15 Oct, PWJ saw a Grey Heron and two juv. Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* in the Bay of Biscay, 45.0°N 8.5°W (78nm NNW Spain). The heron landed aboard briefly three times, and then departed NE. A Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* was found in wheelhouse on 16th, when close off Lisbon, but later died. On 17th, two ♀ Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* were seen around wheelhouse when 40nm SE C. St. Vincent (36.6°N 08.3°W).

On 18 Oct ARL recorded three Turtle Doves roosting aboard at 21.9°N 17.6°W, 40nm NW C. Corveiro, Mauretania. On 19th, a Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* and two probable Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* (BEH) when 70nm west of Senegal (17.2°N 18.0°W) also a Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* which attempted to land aboard at 1700.

On 20 Oct, ARL saw a probable Whimbrel which circled ship twice and headed off SW, in position 12.3°N 18.0°W, 70nm west of Gambia.

On 2 Nov, T. Barton (SAST) saw a Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* circling vessel at 49.3°N 09.1°W, 145nm SW Scillies.

On 11 Nov, FPV *Vigilant* photographed a Redwing *Turdus iliacus* aboard, when 5nm WNW Sula Sgeir.

On 10 Dec, a Cattle Egret landed aboard MV *Kukawa* at 10.9°N 17.1°W, 40nm west of Bijagos Is., Guinea.

On 23 Dec, MV *Barbara E* (Met) reported a probable European Roller *Coracias garrulus* aboard, in position 06.7°N 17.1°W, 150nm SW Freetown, Sierra Leone.

## SECTION B - ENGLISH CHANNEL and NORTH SEA

1991

On 7 Sep. G. Leaper (SAST) recorded five Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica* and a Curlew *Numenius arquata* heading NE when 5nm west of Jersey.

On 10 Oct, a Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* settled aboard MV *Corystes* (Met) in position 54.1°N 04.2°E, 50nm NW Terschelling, Netherlands, and finally left after docking in Lowestoft on 14th. It lived off small birds which it killed only at night.

During the period 12-29 Oct, G. Leaper (SAST) was aboard a vessel carrying out seismic surveys off Flamborough Hd, 54.3°N 00.2°E, and recorded:

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* - singles on 12th, 25th and 27th.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* - one aboard on 12th.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* - one heading west on 14th.

Curlew - one circling on 12th.

Unidentified small sandpiper *Calidris* sp. - one aboard on 13th.

Unidentified bunting sp. on 12th and 28th (3).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* - one ♂ on 28th.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* - 13th (19, 14th (1), 28th (3), 29th (2).)

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* - single ♂ on 14th and 26th.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* - 13th (6), 14th (10), 21st (6), 28th (12), 29th (10).

Blackbird *Turdus merula* - 13th (2), 14th (1), 26th (1) and single ♂ on 28th and 29th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* - Five on 14th, 35 probables heading S on 26th and two on 29th.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*. 2+ on 26th, also groups of 30+20 "thrushes" heading SW on 29th.

Robin *Erythacus rubecula* - one on 25th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* - flocks of 40+50+1 heading SW on 26th.

Long-eared Owl - one aboard briefly 1200 on 26th, possibly same bird also seen later; also a probable Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* - seen heading south at 0910 on 28th.

On 6 Nov. T. Barton (SAST) was aboard HMS *Jersey* heading south off coast of East Anglia, passing 25nm SE Lowestoft towards English Channel, and recorded a major passage of thrushes *Turdus* sp. during the period 0800-1300. Species identified were Fieldfare (30+1+130), Redwing 3+1+10+70+15+12+10), Blackbird (3+1+1+2+2+1+4+1♂) and Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* (1); unidentified groups of 30, 25, 55, 3, 80, 8, 13, 28, 4, 2, 5 and 16 were also recorded. Flocks of Starlings (25+20+30+20+4) were also seen, and Lapwing (2+1+1). All were heading westerly; the wind was W3-4, with visibility fair to good.

At 0730 on 12 Nov. A. Webb (SAST) recorded a flock of 14 Goldfinches *Carduelis carduelis* heading south when 30nm SE Beachy Hd. (50.4°N 00.6°E; also five Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* at 1020 heading SW when 20nm SE Dungeness, five Dunlin *Calidris alpina* heading west, and numerous groups of Starlings heading SW during the period 1040-1500. Winds were SW 4-6, visibility fair to good.

1250-1400 on 14 Dec. C. Stone (SAST) saw two flocks of Lapwing (18+9) heading south when 30nm NW Cherbourg.

1992

On 16 Jan, T. Barton (SAST) saw a Blackbird aboard briefly at 53.6°N 00.3°E, 55nm NE Cromer, also a Rook *Corvus frugilegus* heading SE on 18th, when in Thames Estuary, 51.6°N 01.7°E.

On 31 Jan T. Barton (SAST) recorded a Rook aboard 30 mins at 56.5°N 00.4°W, 65nm NE St. Abbs Hd.

On 17 Mar, two Redwings settled aboard MV *Telnes* (Met) at 51.9°N 002.1°E, 20nm SE Felixstowe; a Lapwing alighted aboard at 0530 on 19 Mar. and remained until ship arrived Thames estuary.

On 9 Apr, T. Barton (SAST) recorded two House Martins *Delichon urbica* and seven pipits *Anthus* sp. heading north, when 40nm SSE Eddystone, 49.5°N 04.1°W.

At 0710 on 26 Apr, A. Webb (SAST) recorded a Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* at 50.6°N 02.9°W, in Lyme Bay, and a single Swallow heading NW. On 4 May, he recorded a Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* heading north at 49.9°N 03.8°W, 27nm SW Prawle Pt, also a Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* heading west. Nine Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* were sighted flying NW when close off Le Havre.

On 18 May, a Red-spotted Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* ♂ in breeding plumage was photographed aboard MV *Corystes* (Met) in position 56.1°N 00.2°W, 65nm ENE St. Abb's Hd, Northumberland.

On 28 May, a Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* was found freshly dead aboard MV *Kowloon Bay* (Met), on arrival Rotterdam; it had probably arrived in the English Channel. It was found to carry a BTO ring (no. F.82056), from which it is known to have been ringed as a first year bird on 31 Aug '90, at Ickelsham, Sussex.

On 5 Jun, T. Barton (SAST) saw a Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* 30nm south of Eddystone Lt.

On 13 Jul, C. Stone (SAST) recorded two single Swifts at 49.9°N 03.3°W, 30nm SSE Start Pt.

On 13 Jul, T. Barton (SAST) recorded two Whimbrel in the Moray Firth, 20nm SE Wick, also two Curlew off W. Ronaldsay on 14th, and two Curlew 110nm ESE Orkneys on 15th. A Swift *Apus apus* was observed flying SE at 1620 on 17th, 45nm east of Orkneys (59.1°N 01.1°W). A Collared Dove was seen 12nm SW Sumburgh Hd. on 19th.

On 25 Sep, C. Stone (SAST) identified a Rock Pipit *Anthus spinolella* at 53.8°N 01.3°E, 40nm east Flamborough Hd. A Goldcrest and four more Rock Pipits were aboard on 26th, 75nm east Flamborough Hd. On 30 Sep, a Kestrel ♀ *Falco tinnunculus* was seen heading west at 57.3°N 01.7°W, 15nm NE Girdle Ness; also a Chaffinch ♂ which remained aboard until 2 Oct. Other species noted aboard on 30 Sep were: Goldcrest (2), Brambling (1), Song Thrush (1), Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (7+1♂), Starling (1), and House Martin (1).

On 28 Sep, T. Barton (SAST), en route NW Alderney towards Le Havre, recorded a southerly passage of pipits *Anthus* sp. (5+2+1+4) and Swallows (12+1+2+2).

On 30 Sep, a wide range of species were reported aboard MV *Telfnes* during passage up the NE coast from Cromer to anchorage off the Tyne, including juvenile Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* (2), Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* (2), Robin (2), Goldcrests (2), Chaffinch (2), Brambling (1). The weather was thick fog, with visibility less than one nm.

On 3 Oct, three probable Goldcrests were aboard MV *Kowloon Bay* (Met) at 54.2°N 02.5°E, whilst on passage Brunsbuttel to Scarborough.

On 30 Oct, I. Carter (SAST) recorded Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (2) and Starling (7+14) heading easterly at 49.8°N and 03.7°W, 25nm south of Start Pt.

## SECTION C - WEST ATLANTIC (WEST of 30°W)

### 1992

At 0700 on 26 Feb, OOCL *Challenger* (Met), recorded a Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca* aboard, in position 46.5°N 32.5°W - 680nm east of Newfoundland, 480nm NW Azores. It remained aboard until passing the Straits of Dover on 29th - see "Short Note" on page \*\*.

At 0230z 23 May, a Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* landed aboard sailing vessel *Eye of the Wind* (Met), and settled on the topgallant yard in mid-Atlantic, in position 19.4°N 40.9°W, some 930nm WNW C. Verde Is., and remained until 26th, at 20°N 42.9°W, 1040nm NE French Guiana.

On 29 Jun, PKF reported a Cattle Egret, also a possible Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* in posn. 18.5°N 64.5°W, when passing close by the Virgin Is.

On 2 Dec, MV *Altamira* (Met) reported a heron, probably a Tricoloured (Louisiana) Heron *Egretta tricolor* which came aboard whilst on passage from Galveston, Texas to Antwerp during a SW'ly gale. It remained for three days, but no one saw it leave during continuing force 10 SSW gales.

On 12 Dec, MV *Endeavour* (Met) reported a "small bird (about the size of a finch)", which came aboard in position 24.8°N 079.8°W (8nm SE Florida Keys) and flew into the wheelhouse. It was quite tame, and allowed itself to be photographed on the finger of the Master, before flying off towards the north. It was identified from the photograph as an American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* (probable juv. ♂).

## SECTION D - GULF OF MEXICO and CARIBBEAN

1992

On 5 Apr. an egret, identified from excellent sketch as a Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* was aboard all day MV *Harold La Borda* (Met), in posn 23°N 71°W, 80nm north of Caicos I., Bahamas.

On 7 Apr., MT *Jahre Spray* (Met), in posn 20.9°N 083.1°W, 38nm SxW Isla de Pinos (Cuba) reported an unidentified bird aboard. From the description and sketch given (with a white patch noted on head) it was identified as a Purple Gallinule *Porphyrrula martinica*.

## SECTION E - MEDITERRANEAN

1992

On 2 Jun., HMS *Newcastle* recorded a Swallow *Hirundo rustica* circling in posn. 32.5°N 31.2°E, 60nm north of Egypt; also a Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* resting aboard.

On 12 Sep., MV *Providence Bay* (Met) en route Suez to Algeciras, reported a White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* photographed aboard in position 36.5°N 01.6°W, 20nm SE C. de Gata (Spain) bearing a large ring above the knee-joint.

On approaching Barcelona on 19 Oct., PWJ recorded a number of night migrants aboard in posn. 39.6°N 01.0°E at 0700: Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* (1), Robin *Erithacus rubecula* (2), Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* (1), Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (2♂), Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (1 ♀ chasing the other passerines), "willow-chiffs" *phylloscopus* sp. (3), White Wagtails *Motacilla alba* (2); also possible Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* (2 heading south).

On 22 Oct., PWJ recorded a White Wagtail and a Black Redstart (f), aboard at 38.4°N 00.1°E, 20nm ESE Atlantic.

## SECTION F - RED SEA AND GULF OF ADEN

1992

On 9 Aug., a probable Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* landed aboard MV *Staffordshire* (Met) 20nm off Aden, in position 12.6°N 45.2°E, and was seen eating a small unidentified bird.

In early Sep., a probable Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* was aboard MV *Providence Bay* (Met) in S. Red Sea, 16°N 42.4°E.

## SECTION G - INDIAN OCEAN AND ARABIAN SEA

1992

An unidentified heron which landed aboard MV *British Reliance* (Met) on 13 Sep. in position 09°N 53.7°E, 150nm from Ras Hafun, Somalia, is most likely to have been a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*.

Two homing pigeons landed aboard MV *BP Admiral* on 15 Nov. in position 06°N 08.4°E, while crossing Bay of Bengal, from Sumatra to Sri Lanka.

## SECTION H - PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN

NIL

# SECTION I - PACIFIC, CHINA SEA, YELLOW SEA, CORAL SEA AND PHILIPPINE SEA

1992

On 22 Feb, MCL examined (BEH) an Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea* found freshly dead at 16.1°N 95.2°W, close off Salina Cruz, Mexico.

On 23 Feb, MCL recorded a Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* which came aboard when close off Salina Cruz (16.1°N 96.2°W), and stayed until 25th feeding on small birds including three probable Least Terns *Sterna antillarum*. It was last seen in posn. 18.7°N 104.9°W, 40nm off Manzanillo, Mexico.

At 0730 on 20 Mar, MCL recorded a Western Meadowlark *Sturnella neglecta* at 30.5°N 122.7°W, which stayed until arrival San Francisco later that day. A probable Evening Grosbeak *Coccothraustes vespertinus* was aboard at 1000 when 26nm west of Pigeon Point, Ca.

On 8 Apr, two Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* were identified ("hunched position, with distinctive ginger-brown head and vee on breast. Beaks light orange . . . feet black") aboard MV *Arafura* in posn 25.3°N 121.7°E (E. China Sea, 10nm north of Keeling, Taiwan).

On 17 Apr NGS reported a flock of six Pied Heron *Egretta picata* flying north in central Gulf of Carpentaria (12.3°S 138.6°E, 110nm east C. Arnhem); also a Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus* aboard briefly on 18th, and a Great Egret *Egretta alba* flying north on 19th in posn 12.5°S 139.2°E. The winds during this period were easterly 10-12 kts.

On 21 Apr, NGS saw a flock of 500 Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca* in the Torres Strait at 10.6°S 142.1°E, 6nm NW Prince of Wales Is. The birds were in a loose "V" formation, and flew over the ship at about 40m, heading north.

In the E. Pacific off California on 22 Apr, MCL identified a Wilson's Warbler *Wilsonia pusilla* aboard first seen at 21.4°N 109.3°W, 90nm SE C. San Lucas, Mexico. It remained all day. On 30 Apr, two Brown-headed Cowbirds *Molothrus ater* (1♂, 1♀) were aboard in an exhausted state at 24.9°N 113.4°W, 62nm west of C. San Lorenzo.

On 3 May, in overcast misty conditions (vis 5-6nm) at 36.5°N 111.2°W, 30nm off California, MCL recorded a variety of species aboard am, which remained until anchored off Oakland, Ca, pm. Those identified included Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata* (1♀), a probable Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia* ♀, a probable Black-throated Warbler *Dendroica nigrescens*, Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*, Brown-headed Cowbird (2), and Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (1). A Cliff Swallow *Hirundo pyrrhonota* was seen circling the ship on 9 May, when 42nm SW San Nicholas I. (32.9°N 129.3°W), and on 10th a Rock Dove *Columba livia* roosting aboard, and a Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* flew close by heading SW at 30.2°N 117.9°W, 100nm WSW Mexico. On 11th, MCL recorded a probable Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus* aboard throughout day (posn 25.8°N 114.2°W, nearest land 60nm bearing 028°).

On 20 May, MGW reported two probable Wandering Tattler *Heteroscelus incanus* circling ship twice and then departed east in posn 53.7°N 148.0°W, 260nm SE Kodiak I., Alaska.

On 28 May, MGW recorded a White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* aboard when 35nm WNW Unalaska I. It had been aboard two days, and was later found dead.

On 29 May, in the Bering Sea, MGW saw three probable Bean Geese *Anser fabalis* close alongside the bridge heading WSW; detailed description closely resembled this species, with which observer is familiar in Europe.

MV *BP Argosy* (Met) reported that when passing the California Baja peninsula (in October, but date not given), a number of small unidentifiable "hawk-like" birds joined the ship and stayed 2-3 days, catching and eating a number of "sparrow-sized birds". When the "sparrows" had been eaten, all but one disappeared. This was fed by the Second Engineer with red meat. On arrival at Callao, Peru (on 20 Oct), the hawk initially refused to leave, but left after two days. (COMMENT. Sketch and photograph identify this as American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*. This species is frequently reported aboard ships, and feeding on small migrants, but usually off the east coast USA. This record from the Pacific, and the distance travelled (c2,700nm) is highly unusual).

On 17 Oct, at 25.8°N 114.2°W (60nm SSW Mexico), MCL recorded a Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* which arrived from NW and departed SE; also a Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata* feeding on dead insects trapped on bridge wing, and a Mourning

Dove aboard until dusk. On 20 Oct, two Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* were seen while berthing San Francisco.

On 1 Nov, 12 Cattle Egret were noted by MCL attempting to land aboard at 24.9°N 113.4°W, 6nm off C. San Lorenzo, Mexico; eight remained one hour, and were seen to depart easterly. An Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* circled twice at 1700, and departed ESE.

On 2 Nov, a Black Turnstone *Arenaria melanocephala* came aboard for three hours at 21.9°N 109.5°W, 80nm WNW C. San Lucas, and departed ENE. Four Cattle Egrets flew past heading ESE at 0830, and two American Kestrels (1♂, 1♀) arrived at 1200 (21.5°N 104.1°W) and were still aboard at dusk. A Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* (juv) arrived from SE at 1200, and was seen eating a small unidentified bird at 1600; it was still aboard at dusk. The ship was heading for Manzanillo, course 112° at 12.5kts.

On 5 Dec, four Cliff Swallows came aboard MV *Pacific Teal* (Met) in position 09.6°N 92.2°W, 270nm SW El Salvador, East Pacific, and remained 24 hrs. On 7 Dec, a Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* was aboard in Sea of Japan, 38.6°N 137.7°E, 70nm north of Honshu.

MV *Wellington Star* (Met) reported that, on 23 Dec, three probable Cattle Egrets landed aboard whilst stopped and drifting in position 27.6°N 125.7°W, 600nm west of California.

## SECTION J - SOUTH ATLANTIC

1992

On 19 May, AHT reported a Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* aboard at 37.4°S 46.2°W (450nm SE Uruguay), which remained all day.

On 20 May, PKF reported a Cattle Egret aboard shortly after leaving Falklands (position not given).

On 27 May, AHT recorded a Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* aboard at 00.6°S 40.0°W, 140nm north of Brazilian coast.

M.B.C.



Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*, off Chile 28°S 075°W, 7 Apr'92  
Photo: Lt. Cdr. S. E. Gaskin, RN

## LANDBIRD REPORTS FROM OCEAN WEATHERSHIP STATION LIMA, 1992

Summarised by Commander M.B. Casement, O.B.E., Royal Navy.

Landbird records from or near Station LIMA (57°N 20°W - 210nm WSW Rockall, 450nm S. Iceland) were received from H.J. Freckleton and Met Staff of OWS *Cumulus*, covering two trips only - voyage Nos 66 and 70). Records cover the following periods: 12-30 May and 11-31 Oct, with a few additional notes extracted from seabird record sheets.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*. Two reported (no details) flying past low on 26 Apr. Pintail *Anas acuta*. 29 May, one seen on water, then departed N.

Scaup *Aythia marila*. One reported (no details) 19 Oct.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*. 30 May (two groups of 10 and 7 arr. from SE, circled ship and dep NE. At 1000 group of 7 aboard briefly - two stayed until evening. A group of 4 circled ship 1720 and dep. NE.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*. One aboard 25 Apr.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. One aboard 25 Apr. One on 30 May passed close by ship heading N.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*. Singles aboard 27 May and 28 May.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*. One landed aboard 1245z and departed during darkness.

Swift *Apus apus*. One circled ship briefly 30 May and dep. N.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*. Several aboard briefly 17 May (2), 18 May (2+1), 24 May (1), 30 May (2).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. One landed aboard 19 Apr, and released dawn on 20th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*. One died after 10 hrs aboard on 15 May.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. One flew around briefly 11 Oct and dep. SE.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*. One aboard 10 mins on 11 Oct.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*. One circled ship 3 times on 11 Oct and dep. N

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*. 12 May (2 aboard 12 hrs); one aboard briefly 16 Oct.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. One aboard 31 Oct.

**COMMENT.** The number of species (17) compares with previous years: 1986 (14), 1987 (17), 1988 (38), 1989 (14), 1990 (13) and 1991 (19). Surprisingly, there are no records this year of Wheatear or Merlin. The Pied Flycatcher, Pintail and Scaup records are unusual.

M.B.C.

## SEABIRD REPORTS FROM OCEAN WEATHERSHIP STATION LIMA, 1992

Summarised by Captain P.W.G. Chilman, M.N.

All observations are from OWS *Cumulus*, and the format of the summary remains unchanged. The total number of observation days for 1992 was 296 - eight days less than in 1991.

Totals of daily counts (including immatures shown in brackets, where recorded) were: Fulmar 21,002 (75 blue phase); Gannet 267 (65); Herring Gulls 2 (0); Lesser Black-backed Gull 421 (63); Great Black-backed Gull 93 (40); Glaucous Gull 23 (16); Iceland Gull 3 (2); and Kittiwakes 22,932 (not separated).

Last year I noted that there had been a marked increase in the

numbers of the above species, and most of the less frequent species. This year there does not appear to be any pattern. Fulmars have increased again, by 4,529 from last year, and 9,336 from 1990, although the numbers of blue phase are down by 263 which is still many more than in previous years.

The Kittiwake count has dropped by about 600 but is still very high, compared with earlier years. The highest monthly counts this year were an average of 152 birds per day in August, and 150 per day in April.

Many of the less frequent species have shown some increase again, the most notable being Great Shearwater with a total of 1,768 this year, as against 49, 29, and 78 in the last three years. All except one of the total in 1992 were sighted in October.

Seen again for the first time in several years were: Ivory Gull (an immature in May), and Common Gull (two adults in August).

A new species this year was a cormorant in August.

A Bridled Guillemot was definitely identified in July, the first time I can remember this form being reported.

The only report of an oiled bird this year was a heavily oiled Little Auk, which died aboard in March.

Again, we are most grateful to the Met. Staff of OWS *Cumulus*, for their continuing hard work in providing this interesting data.

### Summary of Seabird Sightings, Station Lima (57°N 20°W)

Month 1992	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Observation days (296)	19	27	30	22	28	15	25	24	23	29	26	28
Fulmar	x	o	o	o	x	o	x	x	x	x	o	o
Great Shearwater								—		x		
Sooty Shearwater								—	—	—	+	—
Munx Shearwater	—				—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gannet	+	—	—	+	+	+	+	+	—	—	—	—
Great Skua	—	—	+	—	—	—	—	+	+	—	—	—
Pomarine Skua					—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Arctic Skua								—	—	—	—	—
Long-tailed Skua							—	—	—	—	—	—
Ivory Gull							—	—	—	—	—	—
Common Gull								—	—	—	—	—
Herring Gull								—	—	—	—	—
Lesser Black-back	—	—	—	+	+	—	+	+	—	—	—	—
Great Black-back					—	—	—	—	—	+	—	—
Glaucous Gull	—								—	—	—	—
Iceland Gull									—	—	—	—
Kittiwake	x	o	x	x	x	o	o	x	x	x	+	o
Arctic Tern								—	+	—		
Common Tern								—	+	—		
Little Auk	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Guillemot	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Cormorant												

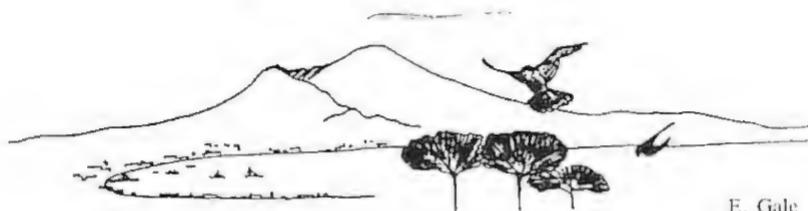
#### KEY

— Occasional sightings  
+ Average 1-9 per day

o Average 10-49 per day  
x Average 50 or more per day

## NAPLES REPORT 1993

by D.S. Dobson and others



E. Gale

### INTRODUCTION (D.S. Dobson)

Having written that admonitory buck-up stuff in the foreword, I have to report that, while we have had a pleasantly active year in Naples, we haven't done quite as well as we had hoped, particularly on matters that are most relevant to the RNBWS. Our grand plan for the year included a visit to Punta Licosa, to establish whether or not Audouin's Gulls breed there, but we won't achieve that until next year; thus that small but useful piece of research remains incomplete. So too does our seabird and shorebird mapping of the local area.

There have been some successes however: we had a splendid families' day visit to Castelvolturno - some 25 people in all - when there were plenty of birds to see, and an excellent picnic at the end of it. In fact, we had several outings there, and Lizzie Gale has described two of them below. Lizzie also writes about World Wildlife Fund (WWF) reserves in our part of Italy, several of which we have now visited. One such was a wives trip to Persano, and another to Monte Polveracchio, near Salerno, when four of us tagged on to an American group who had come to Italy for an adventure holiday, organised by Mark Walters. They certainly got their adventure, but the members of the group were all very elderly, and rather less capable and fit than any of us realised. As a result, your members were employed in the Sherpa role for the most part, shepherding the guests through the rough country in heavy rain and slithering mud, to the sound of a muttered mantra from the holiday brochure: 'no part of the tour will be arduous'. Perhaps I should add that the day was a happy and rewarding one, though the birds for the most part took sensible cover from the rain.

Here in Naples, as the deadline for this report approaches, I can report that two young Kestrels have been successfully reared in the tufa cliffs in our garden, and the birds are a delight to watch as they fly together, and the young gain confidence in the air. To my chagrin, my Peregrines of last year have proved to be Hobbies, and they are breeding in a tufa cliff on the island of Nisida, where I work. (COMMENT. Habitat suggests Eleonora's Falcons are more probable here. M.B.C.) But there are Peregrines nearby, for Mark and Giancarlo saw two young birds doing their acrobatic flying near the top of Vesuvius, a few days ago.

## ITALIAN OVERVIEW

by M. Walters

In southern Italy, despite the growing interest in environmental concerns as a whole, and in birdwatching in particular, there still remain a considerable number of lacunae in the area. The hilly inaccessible nature of the terrain, combined with the lack of skilled and experienced observers on the ground means that much of southern Italy is, ornithologically speaking, uncharted territory.

The status of the Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii* is a case in point. It definitely winters in the isolated pockets on the coast of Campania, south of Naples, and is known to breed in Apulia on the Adriatic. These are relatively recent discoveries, but there are several question marks to be raised here: have all the wintering and breeding sites been identified? Could it breed as well as winter in Campania?

The Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris* is another species which merits further attention. It is found widely in the Region of Campania, usually above 1200/1300 metres, but is not reported in the literature as occurring in this Region. In the field, it is difficult to distinguish from the Short-toed Treecreeper *C. brachydactyla*, which is found at lower altitudes. In this case, song is the prime distinguishing feature. Again, this discovery begs a whole series of further questions: what is the exact range of the Treecreeper? What is the cut-off point in metres a.s.l., below which this species does not occur?

Strangely enough, an important source of ornithological information is the hunting fraternity, and the few taxidermists still active in the south. Many of Italy's (thankfully dwindling) 1.5 million hunters have covered territory where no ornithologist has trodden, and invaluable information may be gleaned from them. I know that the idea of ornithologists and hunters working together to build up a comprehensive picture of southern Italian avifauna is frowned upon in deeper green quarters, but if we are to map out species in the area and monitor the impact of various factors on bird populations, broad-based cooperation may well be necessary.

Bird-ringing activities have also been extremely productive in terms of data. The Ornithological Association of Southern Italy (ASOIM) and the Wader Ringing Group (GIL) both operate in the Region of Campania. Species like the Garden Warbler, which would not normally be heard on migration, and thus perhaps remain unnoticed and/or identified, are revealed to be common migrants, with as many as 765 ringed between 1980 and 1991 by teams from the Zoology Department of Naples University (ASOIM).

A contingent from the RNBWS visited an international ringing camp located in the mosquito-infested buffalo wallows 25km north west of Naples, organised by GIL, and below is a table showing the various species caught and ringed. The data is included by kind permission of Sergio Scecca and Giancarlo Moschetti.

There were some interesting variations from past years. The Pratincole and Terek Sandpiper were welcome and rather unexpected additions to the list, but more surprising was the lack of Common Sandpipers this year (6) when last year there were a great many. Also

interesting was the total absence (among some hundred warblers) of the Melodious Warbler, a species which we know is a common visitor to southern Italy. There is a theory that these take a different migration route from the rest, and instead of flying from Tunisia to Sicily they cross the Straits of Gibraltar, fly across Spain and the south of France, then south down the Apennines to southern Italy.

### Bird-ringing 6 March - 26 May 1993

Little Grebe <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	1	House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i>	6
Garganey <i>Anas querquedula</i>	2	Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	5
Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	2	Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2	Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	4
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	13	Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	2
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	1	Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	3
Pratincole <i>Glareola pratincola</i>	1	Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	4
Little Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>	18	Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>	11
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	12	Fan-tailed Warbler <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	5
Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	3	Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	5
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squaterola</i>	3	Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	4
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	1	Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	8
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	451	Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	9
Temminck's Stint <i>Calidris temminckii</i>	11	Sardinian Warbler <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	13
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	479	Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	9
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	5	Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	20
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	108	Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	12
Whimbrel <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	3	Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	1
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	3	Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1
Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i>	1	Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	11
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	9	Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	1
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	2	Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	4
Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3	Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	2
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	145	Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>	1
Terek Sandpiper <i>Xenus cinereus</i>	1	Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	1
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	6	Italian Sparrow <i>Passer italiae</i>	18
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	4	Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>	21
Little Gull <i>Larus minutus</i>	4	Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2
Black Tern <i>Chlidonias niger</i>	28	Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>	24
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	1	Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i>	6
Little Owl <i>Athene noctua</i>	1	Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	3
Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	2	Cirl Bunting <i>Emberiza cirlus</i>	5
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	9	Corn Bunting <i>Miliaria calandra</i>	1
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	9		
		Total	1,568

### VISIT TO CASTEL VOLTURNO

24 Jan and 3 Feb '93

by E. Gale

We arranged to meet at the site shortly after 0700, which was perhaps a little over-enthusiastic as it was far from fully light when we arrived, and many birds didn't show themselves for an hour or more. The same can be said for the rest of the human race, for apart from a hardy couple of fishermen seated by their bonfire on the foreshore, we had the area to ourselves until about 0900, when our peace was disturbed by a walker with a huge hunting dog - part mastiff, part pointer, perhaps - which splashed delightedly through the pools scattering the birds before it.

One is never completely relaxed at Volturno, which is very much Camorra country, where everyone met is male, and decidedly shady looking. An example of this was a group of four swarthy and unshaven young men on the seafront, watching the birds through binoculars. They

professed to be birdwatchers, but one of them had a bandolier of cartridges, and as they walked away they laughed and let off fire-crackers to put all the birds to flight.

Volturno bird life in January was not as prolific as in the autumn, but it was very interesting, nonetheless. The most noticeable change was the huge increase in the number of Coots - there were literally hundreds of them. We saw no Spoonbills this time, nor Kingfishers, and there were fewer herons, egrets and Herring Gulls. However, there were more Cormorants, and also large numbers of Black-headed Gulls. Snipe also were in evidence, plus Cetti's Warblers, and it was not long before we spotted a Marsh Harrier patrolling over the NATO transmitter site.

It was an absorbing, but at the same time frustrating morning, for we lacked Mark Walters' expertise, and failed to identify positively two species of wildfowl, neither of which seemed to match our book illustrations. We came to the conclusion that these birds were in different, winter plumage. For the future, we will do more sketches, noting identifying features in order to improve our success rate. We also hope to walk around the adjacent NATO transmitter site which has its own reed beds, and which should be a haven for birds.

**Wednesday 3 February.** Following our visit of 24 January, the main purpose today was to map out directions to this site for future RNBWS watchers to the Naples area. I arrived just after 1100, on a particularly sunny and warm day, with no clouds or wind, and Ischia just visible in the blue/grey haze.

My first studied sighting was of a lone Black-headed Gull in winter plumage. It was swimming round and round, but continually pecking the water. As the pond was only a few inches deep, I surmised it was perhaps searching out grubs in the mud.

I drove a little further on, and parked by the large pond. Black-headed Gulls were the most numerous today, and far outnumbered the Coots. The gulls were doing nothing in particular, but floating, preening or sleeping. I noted on a previous visit here how they flew in from the sea when the sun suddenly came out and shone down on the ponds, as it was doing today. I wondered if that has any connection with gull behaviour towards sunlight and water. I noticed two gulls in the distance which seemed much larger than the rest, but could not distinguish any markings.

A car drove past with four men who stopped a little further on to study the birds through binoculars. The cynicism in me suggests that they are inspecting the ponds for something worth shooting. They continued onwards towards the beach. I am always reluctant, here, about straying too far from the car when I am by myself.

The Cormorants were swimming or perched in their usual place on the wooden poles, drying their wings. There is one immature with them, with brown markings.

The Coots were as numerous as on other visits this year, but I scanned the distance for ducks. Perhaps I am making a mistake in not studying the coots while they are here. If there had been numerous ducks

and one or two coots no doubt my interest would have been with the coots. On reflection, perhaps we should use these opportunities to study coot behaviour instead of always in search of rarer sightings. I think it is probably an amateur birdwatcher's mistake to ignore the numerous in favour of the lesser numbers. The coots could leave any day. Next visit!

It is midday now with one or two cormorants flying overhead; no egrets flying, but I can see their white bodies in the distance amongst the reed-beds; no herons to be seen.

Hurray! The Kingfisher shoots across my path. One always comes here in the hope of seeing one, and though I caught only a glimpse of it, I am confident that is what it was.

The man who collects sticks from the beach rides past with a large bundle tied to the back of his bike. I am here to observe the birds, but can't help but wonder why he goes to the bother of hauling them from the beach each day. Maybe the wood makes particularly good lighting or smoking wood. I make a note to come here early and make a fire to cook bacon and eggs after an early morning birdwatching session. At least I might find out the answer.

I drove on towards the beach and parked near the shaded parking to walk along the beach hoping to get a better view of these ducks which had baffled us on the previous visits. I sat for 20 minutes, but they were still too distant to make a sure sighting. A red Fiat Uno drove up beside mine, in the distance, so I continued to scan both the lake, and my car, as is the custom here in Naples.

My anonymous ducks seemed to be heading towards the south of the lake so I decided to return to the car to look for a track in that direction, hopefully to get a better view - the two shady characters from the red car had no influence on my decision! After all, the purpose of my visit is to map out directions for other birdwatchers to follow.

Driving back from the beach, I had a particularly good sighting of a Goldfinch - no need for binoculars. I eventually find the road to the south of the lake, but my approach was like searching for a way out of a maze. I will be able to map out a more direct plan, on leaving. On my approach, an egret flies out of the reed-bed, its long black legs very visible. The site is thoroughly recommended, and one is much closer to the birds. I sat quietly among the Coots - the gulls are not down this end, but there are hundreds of white specks in the distance, from where I had come. The Coots obviously have the run of the lake because they are everywhere.

The more I visit this area, the more a pattern or system emerges in the form of territories and daily habits of the birds. With my bird-book, binoculars, and with the sun right behind me, I can now see the colouring of the ducks, not merely their silhouettes. They are so close that I can write with confidence that they are Pochards *Aythia ferina* - seven pairs. I wonder if they breed here. Our tentative identification on Sunday is right. I believe also that we were correct about the solitary Shoveler *Anas clypeata* spotted on Sunday. He was there again today, but too distant to be absolutely sure. I suddenly spied three herons

standing in the reeds on the far shore. I've only ever seen them in this part of the lake, and note the need to plot bird territories and locations.

It was now 1430, and I began to drive home when I saw very clearly a pair of Marsh Harriers overhead. Their presence caused dozens of Snipe to be flushed out from among the reed-beds, in a somewhat bat-like flight. Clearly the angle of the sun is important for picking out markings and colour - it was the best sighting of the Marsh Harriers so far. My first impression was of their rusty pink undersides and dark backs and wings. After scanning the reeds, they flew off towards the receiver site. I remained greedily hoping for another sighting, but they did not return, though I was fully compensated by another excellent view of several Little Grebes, in their black and white winter plumage. They seemed to dive far more frequently than either the Coots or Pochards. Again, I could clearly make out their plumage, so we can say without doubt that the small ducks we had seen before were Little Grebes. They were less numerous, maybe about ten at the most, on the lake.

The Snipe returned to their reed-beds about seven minutes later, and settled while I drove off along the hard sandy track to find the best way back, and to continue mapping. There were two Pied Wagtails *Motacilla alba* ahead of me on the road - I've often noticed their penchant for sandy tracks.

I was extremely fortunate with my sightings today, and I am full of enthusiasm, and aware how important it is to have the sunlight at the correct angle for birdwatching.

## A WEEKEND IN THE LITTLE DOLOMITES UNDER NAVAL COMMAND

by J.M.E. Took (a guest visitor to Naples)

While our prime interest was to see something of the avifauna of the area, our party of nine was suitably leavened by members knowledgeable in botany and butterflies, thus providing a proper all round appreciation of our observations.

For three of us, the early sightings were limited to Sparrow and Swift, seen during the first two hours negotiating the Neapolitan traffic. My lasting memory is the sublime calm of the Admiral's lady at the controls, and approaching a five-road junction, each road containing five lanes of traffic, there being neither traffic lights nor police. Once out on the open road, we sped southwards into Vassilicata and Potenza. We had been told to expect kites, and had a fine view of a Black Kite as it cruised low over the motorway. Then we branched off into a very narrow, twisty and increasingly steep road through thickly wooded hills up the mountainside to where great fingers of limestone reached upwards. Perched on the side of one of these was the village of Pietrapertosa, where we located our albergo and the rest of the party. There we saw an Alpine Swift, Black Redstart, Ravens, House Martins, Swallows, and a couple of Nightingales greeted us from hundreds of feet below. The view from our mountain top was stupendous.

Saturday, we set forth into the remarkably beautiful countryside, predominantly wooded with steep hillsides thickly covered by small oaks,

flowering ash, and acacia, also light undergrowth and open grassland meadows. In early May, everything was at its fecund best, with trees lush with leaves and in flower. Colourful wild flowers were in profusion, including blue pansy-like heartsease, and bright golden wild tulips.

The birdsong was at its peak, and for ten minutes we listened to the flute-like music of a Golden Oriole, quite close by. Other species heard, and many also seen, included Whitethroat, Blackbird, Robin, Blackcap, Cirl Bunting, Short-toed Treecreeper, Nightingale, Chaffinch, Red-backed Shrike, Cuckoo, Serin, Wren and Hoopoe. Upon a rocky crag we saw a pair of Blue Rock Thrushes, with a stunning view of the male in the bright sunlight; also a Rock Bunting. These were probably breeding.



Red Kite  
Sketch by E. Gale

We took our picnic high up, overlooking a sloping meadow, to the music of two Woodlarks, among the finest of songbirds. Another striking experience was looking down on two Black Kites mobbing a Red Kite in a river valley. The light was perfect, and we enjoyed magnificent views of this display. In open country we saw a Buzzard, Corn Bunting, Stonechat, Black-eared Wheatear, Lesser Grey Shrike, and heard Quail. A Collared Flycatcher and Nuthatch were noted in forest.

Our botanical member showed us many orchids, whose names I cannot remember, and there were numerous butterflies - many more than we see today in Britain. Several species of fritillaries were plentiful, also Wall, Clouded Yellow, Green Hairstreak, Orange Tip, various browns and blues and many others.

Our count of bird species over the two days totalled 56, including an unidentified small eagle, but a surprising omission was Willow Warbler, although we heard Chiffchaff - altogether a very creditable achievement, in our opinion, in this type of habitat. Thank you, David, Joanna, Mark and his parents, Lizzie and Henry, for a fulfilling experience of the Little Dolomites.

## WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (WWF) RESERVES - L'IMPERO DEL PANDA

by E. Gale

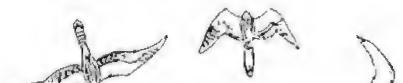
Italy is a funny place. I can be arrested for trespass if I tramp on private land in pursuit of birds, but if I carry a shotgun I have immunity. However, the hunters do not hold total sway, for the WWF in Italy has no less than 50 reserves - oasi - and they are well run. The half dozen or so I have visited were manned by no more than two or three wardens, with assistants who were usually conscientious objectors doing their National Service. Opening times are pretty restricted, and one is always escorted by a warden, but I found that a good thing because the wardens were a mine of information, especially on birds passing through. Thus it was at Orbetello, a reserve north of Rome, where I was told exactly when and where to watch the Ospreys present that week in April, en route to Corsica. At another reserve, Macchiatonda, on the coast west of Rome, I was given my first closeup of a Penduline Tit's nest, plus a marvellous view of a lone Spoonbill, and a group of Black-winged Stilts. My favourite reserve, however, is at Persano, near Salerno, and a bare hour from Naples, where the birds abound - grebes, herons, egrets, Marsh Harriers, and many many more. The wardens are especially helpful, and the little trattoria by the gate is a perfect haven after a day's birdwatching.

I have to admit I have not met much of a cross section of the Italian public in the hides. The watchers have tended to be professional nature photographers, from the UK and Germany in particular. However, I am encouraged by the fact that the Italians I did see were schoolchildren on organised school trips. So the WWF's role of 'education in environmental awareness' is working, and this came home to me the day I walked into what I thought was an empty hide, only to be faced with 20 or more pairs of Neapolitan bambini eyes turned towards me for a split second, and then back to the courtship display of the Great Crested Grebe. In future, I like to think, these children will be carrying binoculars, and not guns.

NOTE. A booklet on WWF reserves in Italy is available from: WWF, Via Salaria 290, 00199 Rome.

D.S. Dobson, E. Gale, M. Walters, HQ AFSOUTH, Naples, BFPO8.

Kestrels - studies in flight



Sketches by E. Gale

## SHORT NOTES

### Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos* off Cornwall

by First Officer (SE) (Comms) W.F. Curtis, RFA

**OBSERVATION.** On 29 April 1985, whilst aboard RFA *Sir Bedivere*, in position 49.6°N 05.3°W, about 35nm south of the Lizard, a "mollymawk" was observed ahead of the vessel, which on closer approach was identified as an adult Yellow-nosed Albatross. This record is the first definite occurrence in British waters, and for the western Palearctic.

The weather at the time was good, with a SSW'ly wind of about 20kts; visibility - at least 20nm; sea-state - slight to moderate with a low SW swell; height of eye - c35ft; Sea-water temp - 11°C.

The bird was first observed ahead of the vessel at a range of about 1500 yds. in the vicinity of three adult Gannets *Morus bassanus*, when the longer wings, shorter body and all dark (black) upper wings were noticeable. The bird flew with typical albatross action - stiff-winged - banking high - gaining altitude into the wind, and momentum with loss of height down-wind. At this range the underwings appeared all white, thus ruling out both Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris* and Grey-headed Albatross *D. chrysostoma*. On closer approach to the ship, the dark bill, dusky wash to the head, plus quite broad dark leading edge to the underwing, and dark, much narrower trailing edge, made the bird almost certainly Yellow-nosed (although at this range Buller's *D. bulleri* could not be ruled out). The bird came towards the vessel, passing down the side at 250-200 yards range, finally turning eastwards when off the quarter, and was last seen flying in that general direction at a range of about 2.5nm. The following are notes made at the time, and written up immediately afterwards in a more orderly manner:

#### **“Upperparts.”**

Wings - brownish/black with quite distinct ivory white primary shafts.

Saddle - paler than wings, more greyish/black.

Tail - brownish to greyish/brown - not as dark as wings.

Head - greyish, shading paler to white on the nape.

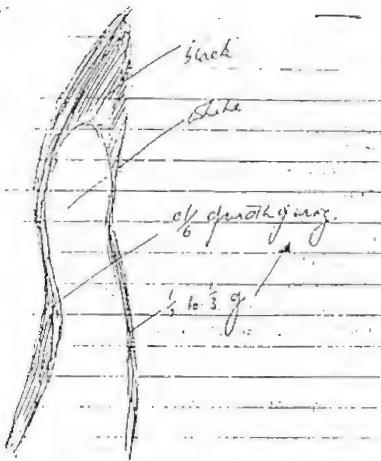
Rump - white.

#### **Underparts.**

White, with the exception of some grey suffusion extending on to the sides of the breast (not easily seen) and edges of the underwings which were dark (black). Leading edges of the underwings having a dark area at least twice as broad as that of the trailing edge, though a little broadening out at the primaries.

**Feet/legs:** Not seen.

**Bill:** Long - black with yellow line along the culminicorn; the remainder being black".



typical ab. dark upp. wifflord. nest.  
white - head part. nape. sides neck white.  
bare grey - top head. pink - at eye. bill long.  
inner black - yellowish culmen iron.

The bird was first observed with the naked eye, but latterly with 10x40 binoculars.

**COMMENTS.** The general size and shape of the bird immediately pointed to one of the "mollymawks" - the species being identified as a Yellow-nosed Albatross by the combination of the bill and underwing features.

It presumably belonged to the nominate race of the Atlantic, on account of the grey on the head; the race *D. c. bassi* of the Indian Ocean, although having some grey on the head, appears to lose this rapidly and, at sea, generally appears white-headed. The fact that the nominate race breeds in the Tristan da Cunha group and on Gough Island, having a population of about six times that of the nearest colony of *bassi* (on Prince Edward Island) would also make the nominate race the likeliest.

**Previous experience with this species.** I first saw this species off Southern Africa in November 1963, and subsequently in the same areas in 1964, 1965/66, 1968, 1972, 1973 (including visits to Gough Island, where birds were seen on the nest), and 1982-4.

**Experience of similar species.** Both Black-browed and Grey-headed have been seen during periods similar to Yellow-nosed, though only a few Grey-headed until 1982-4, when several voyages were made to the Falklands and South Georgia. During these latter years up to 5,000 of the former have been seen in a day, with possibly as many as 2,500 of the latter off both islands, during mainly the Austral winter. (Since 1985 I have spent a further 18 months at sea in the South Atlantic, having seen hundreds of thousands more of both these two species; conservatively I would estimate that in 28 years at sea I have seen well over one million of these two species, also the first three Atlantic Buller's

Albatrosses, off the Falklands (*Sea Swallow* 37:62-63), and perhaps 30,000 Yellow-nose.

**Status of Yellow-nosed Albatross in the North Atlantic Ocean.** There are, prior to this record, some 15 occurrences of this species from the eastern seaboard of N. America, mainly from the Delaware River north to Nova Scotia. At least one has been shot, and another found exhausted some 40 miles inland. Of the three S. Atlantic "mollymawks", this species ranges the furthest north so it would be the most likely candidate to cross the Equator and thus, with the prevailing winds, (and perhaps the assistance of a tropical depression) it would occur in the SW North Atlantic before possibly moving northwards along the eastern seaboard. From the area of most occurrences it would again seem the most likely to range NE along the depression track to reach Europe.

Before this record, however, there were no definite records from Europe, although during the last century several were "reported". Confusion and/or doubt exists with all these early records: firstly because this species was frequently confused with Grey-headed, and secondly the fact that not all records were fully and comprehensively documented. Two records should be mentioned:

The first concerns a bird collected in the Westmann Islands off southern Iceland in about 1844, and identified as a Yellow-nosed Albatross; the skeleton bird still being in Copenhagen. That the bird was identified as a Yellow-nosed is inevitable as, until about 1850, this was the only species of "mollymawk" described in books. Since that day, this bird has been variously attributed to Yellow-nosed; Grey-headed, and at times confused with the long-staying Black-browed Albatross shot in the Faeroes in 1894. Measurements of this species point towards a rather large Yellow-nosed Albatross.

The second, obtained in August 1889 at Barre de l'Adour Basses Pyrenees, France, was originally recorded as this species, but when the skin was re-examined some 40 years later, was found to be Grey-headed. It is thought that the original skin may have been lost in a fire at the Bayonne Museum, in December 1889, and substituted at a later date by a specimen obtained abroad. Certainly there are grave doubts that the existing skin of the Grey-headed Albatross is the one originally identified as the Yellow-nosed.

The record of the Cornish bird was submitted to the British Birds Rarities Committee, who in turn have submitted it to the BOU Records Committee. Regrettably, the first circulation of the BOURC lacked the sketch of the underwing, owing to an unfortunate oversight of the observer. No decision has been received from the BOURC, despite seven years of deliberation. Thus, although the observer wished to proceed through the "proper channels", it is felt that the record should be published here, for the benefit of all seafarers.

W.F. Curtis, Farm Cottage, Church Lane, Atwick, Driffield, E. Yorkshire YO25 8DH.

**Note by Editor.** Bill Curtis has been sending us many records of all sorts of seabirds, including numerous albatrosses, for some 30 years, and we have no cause to doubt any of them. The past records of Yellow-nosed Albatrosses from the N. Atlantic are summarised by Bourne (*Ibis* 1967, 109: 141-167); the great majority come from the warm waters off eastern North America, south of the Black-browed Albatrosses which predominate off NW Europe. But there is also a similar report of an adult Western Yellow-nosed Albatross at 49°08'N 16°08'W, some 330nm WSW Cape Clear, from another experienced observer, M.H. Thurston, on 5 Dec'86 (see *Chapman & Cheshire Sea Swallow* 36:34, 1987). We also have yet another record of a Yellow-nosed Albatross off Tobago, West Indies at 11.8°N 60.9°W, on 19 Sep'68 by 2nd Officer W. Brackenridge (*Sea Swallow* 21:36, 1971).

M.B.C.

### Observations on the "Marco Polo" Voyage - 2 Aug-12 Nov 1990 by Kevin Morgan

Most readers will be familiar with the overland trek of Marco Polo to China, begun in 1271. But few know the story of his return journey by sea, in about 1292, sailing through the Straits of Hormuz with a fleet of Royal sailing junks; he was accompanying Princess Cocachin, who was to wed a Persian prince, thus cementing a relationship between the Persian and Mongol empires.

The "Marco Polo" Voyage was to commemorate this original voyage, to focus on the Chinese maritime heritage; the Chinese were exploring the high seas before the Portuguese, (usually with eunuchs in charge, who were considered to have the necessary "single-mindedness" to lead such voyages!). The expedition junk was built on a traditional Fuzhou design, and named "Cocachin" after the princess. The design of the junk still has many advantages, with a dumpy profile rather like a sea duck, which spends most of its time on the water, whereas western sleek designs resemble more the profiles of "aerial" seabirds.

I had been in touch with Wayne Moran, the expedition leader, concerning the possibilities of observing marine life en route. When funds became available for the "pre-expedition" leg, I was flown out to Hong Kong to join them, in July 1990. Several weeks were spent on the last-minute preparations.

**The outward leg.** The main feature of our time in Hong Kong waters was the lack of seabirds; the harbours were full of Black Kites *Milvus migrans*, rather than gulls. On 2 Aug, after a typhoon passed by quite close, we crossed Mirs Bay into Chinese waters, sighting one Roseate Tern *Sterna dougalii* and Bridled Terns *S. anaethetus*. The latter was the typical seabird of our voyage out to Shanghai, usually seen as singles, or in small flocks.

In the approaches to Shantou, Black-naped Terns *S. sumatrana* were regularly seen, and whilst en route to Xiamen we saw our first "pelagic", a Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*. As in Hong Kong, few birds were seen around Xiamen, but we did have several excitements - sailing close

to some islands just offshore, we were fired upon! We did not realise that the island of Quemoy belonged to Taiwan, and was heavily fortified against the Chinese. On at least four occasions, we were fired on by offshore islands with a Taiwanese presence, but we never found out whether these were intended as warning shots, or aimed to hit us!

Sailing on towards Fuzhou, we had our first light-phased Wedge-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus pacificus*, and on our gradual approach to the mouth of the Min river, on 11 Aug, seven species of seabirds were seen, including three Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis*. At the mouth of the Min, we saw 20+ Great Crested Terns *Sterna bergii*, 30+ Gull-billed Terns *S. nilotica*, "eastern" Common Terns *Sterna hirundo longipennis* and 7+ Black-tailed Gulls *Larus crassirostris*. The presence of adult and immature gulls was an indication of breeding; I was not sure if they bred this far west (26.6°N 119.6°E).

Fuzhou was up-river, and a pilot took us through a narrow gorge, which opened onto a flood-plain. Marsh birds were disappointing, but did include White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucoptera*. The port of Fuzhou is Mawei, where we remained until 22 Aug, delayed by our second typhoon; luckily, the mountains protected us from the worst, but "Typhoon Yancy" caused major damage in Taiwan.

We then hoped to set sail for Shanghai, using the westerly monsoon to take us there within the week, but things did not go according to plan: our adventures could fill a book, and we finally arrived in Shanghai on 29 Sep, having taken 38 days. We had to endure two more typhoons, and the change from the summer monsoon to the winter monsoon. This meant sailing into wind, and our progress was very slow - often backwards, at the mercy of the wind and tides! Some of the more interesting highlights only are listed: two Caspian Terns *Sterna caspia* were seen on leaving the Min river, on 23 Aug, and later that evening a mixed flock of seabirds, including at least nine species (but none new to us on this trip). We were again fired upon as we sailed close to the islands of Mazu Dao (also Taiwanese!).

During a period of slack/adverse winds, and our third typhoon, we lingered around the island of Fuying Dao, where villagers had never seen a westerner before. We rode out the approaching typhoon by "drying out" in the mud - a safe site - and saw a roost of Black-tailed Gulls and various waders, including Grey-rumped Sandpiper *Heteroscelus breviceps*.

We experienced our fourth typhoon anchored off Huanggi, which was closer to the Min river than was Fuying Dao - winds had driven us backwards, after a day at sea. This typhoon came very close, and affected us the worst, with winds reaching at least force 10; I was glad we never had one passing right overhead. After this storm, on 9 Sep, there was an increase in seabird activity in Huanggi harbour, including three probable Roseate Terns and at least four Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus*, in winter plumage.

As we struggled up the coast from Huanggi, we saw Black-naped Terns and Black-tailed Gulls, in the offshore islands off Dabei Leido, and Great Crested terns were becoming more apparent. On the morning of 17 Sep, 300+ Bridled Terns were seen breeding on the islet of Tie

Jiao, between the islands of Beilongshan and Donggua Yu. Other islets suggested breeding Bridled Terns, and also Great Crested Terns. Breeding Great Crested Terns were seen on the conical island of Juan Junmao, (in the Jiushan Is. group) on 22 Sep.

We now approached the extensive Zhoushan group, an original domain of pirates. In a region that resembled western Scotland, we sailed through various channels between islands, observing waders when close to the shore, and a female (or immature) Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitaria* alighted on the mainmast am. on the 26th. We traversed across Hangzhou Wan on 27th; similar to the Bristol Channel, it has a tidal bore, the largest in the world, and even mentioned by Marco Polo. We were sailing across the outer reaches at the time of the year when the bore occurs, so tides are very strong. One surprise on passage across was a Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*, which flew around the junk for a while; the time was early pm, not dusk.

On the far side of Hanzhou Wan, the scenery abruptly changed from the hilly country, familiar since leaving Hong Kong - we had reached the vast flat flood-plain of Yangtze. On the morning of 29th, after slow progress against tides, we progressed up the busy river channel of Nan Shuidao, and we reached the mouth of the Huangpo at 1000. Shanghai was about 14km upriver, and this was one of the busiest river stretches I have ever seen. In the mouth of the Huangpo we had the best sighting of the trip - at least 300+ Brown-headed Gulls *Larus brunnicephalus*, both adults and immatures were feeding. This species is supposed to be uncommon so far east - perhaps they had come down the Yangtze from breeding grounds in central Asia.

**Return Leg.** After a couple of weeks in Shanghai, we set sail on 16 Oct. With the winter monsoon behind us, we made excellent progress. In contrast to our outward journey, we were out to sea and far from land, but the lack of pelagic seabirds was disappointing, apart from some light phase Wedge-tailed Shearwaters on 18th, and a Dunlin *Calidris alpina* was seen aboard for about 15 minutes. A female/immature Siskin *Carduelis spinus* landed aboard, looking among the wooden rigging for food. On 19th, we had yet another passenger land aboard, a White Wagtail *Motacilla alba ocularis*, of the streak-eyed race. It remained all day until we headed inshore for the island of Nanri Dao. Although there were many junks around here, seabirds were few. We had reached this location in four days, whereas the same journey in the reverse direction had taken us 38! We were obliged to spend several days here, because of "official" problems.

We berthed at Quanzhou, an important destination, on 27th; known by the Arabs in the middle ages as the port of Zaiton, it was the second biggest port in the world, in the time of Marco Polo, and it was from here that the fleet of royal sailing junks had set out. Here we saw our first "wintering" seabirds - Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus*. These were also seen as we sailed back into Xiamen on 4 Nov, and we were fired at yet again from Quemoy! We left Xiamen on 5th, seeing more Black-headed Gulls, and a few distant Herring Gulls *L. argentatus*. Nearing Shantou on 6 Nov, over 100 light phase Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were observed, most heading SW, but a few appeared to

be feeding. Land came into view through the haze at about mid-day, and shortly afterwards a Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus auroreus* (f), landed aboard briefly. Closer in, our first Great Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo* on this trip were sighted - about 160 were seen roosting on the islets of Chishizai, with Black-headed Gulls and the occasional Herring Gull. These were still there, as well as some Caspian Terns, when we left Shantou on 9th, now heading back to Hong Kong. During the next two days there appeared to be some local movement of light phase Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, but a disappointment was the lack of Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas*.

Finally, in the early hours of the 11th, we were back in Hong Kong waters. We sailed through the busy waters of Victoria harbour on 12th, with Black-headed Gulls and Herring Gulls having joined the Black Kites for the winter.

**Conclusions.** We had spent 101 days in Chinese waters - what had I learned, as the onboard naturalist? Three thoughts occur:

a. Although Chinese waters are not renowned for seabirds, very little is known about the region, so more observations will help. The liner *Ocean Pearl* sails between Hong Kong and Shanghai. Are there any birdwatchers amongst the staff?

b. Despite looking out specifically for them throughout the voyage, I saw no Chinese Crested Terns *Sterna bernsteinii* or Saundier's Gulls *Larus saundersii*; many believe the former to be extinct, although the latter is to be found at Mai Po in the winter. But we may not have been sailing through the region at the optimum time for these species.

c. Much of the Chinese coast is very rural, with very little evidence of wilderness. The best areas I visited were in Hong Kong waters, such as Mai Po marshes. Thus it will be important to locate and protect what natural areas there are in China, and to safeguard such areas in Hong Kong, post-1997.

Kevin Morgan, B.Sc., CBiol, MBiol, F.R.G.S., 64 Fairford Gardens, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7BJ

## Visits to Mai Po Marshes - Hong Kong, March-April 1992

by Captain D.M. Simpson, MN

6 March, a good overcast morning, which turned into continuous rain, cut this visit short. Very few waders were to be seen - maybe too early? But large numbers of Common Cormorants and Grey Herons were present, and among these stood out, like a sore thumb, one bird of particular interest: **Oriental White Stork** *Ciconia boyciana*. With its black bill and red legs it is perhaps just a well-marked race of the White Stork *C. ciconia*. It is a rare visitor to Hong Kong, and is usually recorded singly. Another interesting bird seen this day was a very large brownish-grey eagle that showed a white tail-base - possibly a White-tailed Sea Eagle *Haliaetus albicilla*, but I could not be sure. There were also quite a few ducks about, including Yellow-nib Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha*?, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* and falcated Teal *Anas falcata*.

A return visit on 2 April showed this area to be full of numerous migrants, including my first ever sighting of Wryneck *Jynx torquata*, Blue-and-White Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* and Sty'an's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella pleskei*.

Huge numbers of waders were present on 7 April, and I saw nine Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus* and several Nordmann's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*; also a Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*.

Captain D.M. Simpson MN, 4 Ruswarp Lane, Whitby, North Yorks, YO21 1ND.

### Trans-Atlantic hitch-hike of Snowy Owl

The following remarkable record is extracted from the Met. Log of OOCL, *Challenger* (Captain C. Sturke), on passage from Montreal to Felixstowe:

At 0700 on 26 February 1992, a Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca* was sighted on top of a three-high tier of containers, in position 46.5°N 32.5°W - 680nm east of Newfoundland, 480nm NW Azores. (The description leaves no doubt as to its identity: "The face of this large bird was pure white and the back and wings had black flashes, approximate wing-span 5ft".) It had arrived during darkness, and positioned itself in the middle of a large patch of snow remaining from the previous week's winter weather. At 1100 this patch of snow had melted, and it shifted sideways two containers to settle on another patch of snow, where it remained for the rest of the day.

By daylight on 27th all snow had melted, and the owl had positioned itself on top of a *white* container. Several times during the day it shifted position, and on one occasion did an inspection flight around the accommodation. On each occasion it relocated on top of a white or light grey container. There was no evidence of the bird having eaten anything since its arrival. On 28th, the owl behaved in a similar manner, but had decided that it was OK to sit on red containers, as well as white ones. It disappeared over the horizon for two hours during the afternoon.

By daybreak on 29th, the ship was well into the English channel and the owl had obviously been busy during the night: the tops of four containers were littered with blood, feathers and other debris. It remained in its midships position throughout the morning and early afternoon, moving only to take "tabnabs" from beneath its wings, and devour them with an obvious savage enjoyment. At 1600, with the ship approaching Dover Straits, the owl set off towards Folkestone, and was not seen again.

**COMMENT by MBC.** This is a highly interesting record, and the first instance known to me of a transatlantic crossing of Snowy Owl, but I suspect that this may be not infrequent. What a pity a photograph was not taken. This bird probably originated from Newfoundland, though its movement at this time of the year is curious, and its arrival in Kent would have caused great excitement amongst the "twitchers" there! The selection of white or light-coloured roosting sites is interesting behaviour, and has probable survival value, in the natural habitat.

MBC

## Kenyon's Shag

by Dr W.R.P. Bourne

The cormorants and shags (*Phalacrocoracidae*) are a most confusing group, consisting of a large number of rather similar forms of uncertain relationship which are normally black with a green or purple sheen in the north, although they may be pied, white breasted or polymorphic in the south. Their classification has recently been reviewed by Douglas Siegel-Causey of the University of Kansas (Siegel-Causey 1988), who while investigating bones found in middens has first distinguished peculiarities in those of the Antarctic Peninsula, which appears to stray to Fuegia (Siegel-Causey and Lefrevre 1989) and it may even breed on the Fuegia (Siegel-Causey and Lefrevre 1989) and it may even breed on the Cape Horn islands (Clark *et al.* 1992). He has now detected another new species *Stictocarbo kenyoni* amongst bones from Amchitka Island in the Aleutians (Siegel-Causey 1991).

Apparently numerous bones of half a dozen species of *Phalacrocoracid* from old Aleut middens have now been found to include a few of a smaller shag with minor osteological peculiarities allied to the closely-related Red-faced and Pelagic Shags (or Cormorants) *Stictocarbo urile* and *S. pelagicus*. Three birds of the new form, which occasionally strays east to the Aleutians, were also collected on Amchitka Island by Karl W. Kenyon in 1957, so that it must still survive, and it has been named Kenyon's Shag *S. kenyoni* after him. Unfortunately he noticed little about these birds before they were made into skeletons except that they appeared to have rather slender bills, and clearly as in the case of the Antarctic Shag a full assessment of their status must await further studies of live birds.

It is regrettable that this interesting report is written in a particularly obscure cladistic statistical jargon. It would have been much more informative to have better figures showing the peculiarities of the bones of the supposed new species. It also seems questionable if it is correct that the cliff shags *Stictocarbo* necessarily originated in the southern hemisphere; in view of their limited present southern distribution it is arguable that, whereas the king shags *Leucocarbo* clearly originated in the south, the cliff shags, which include the European Shag *S. aristotelis*, may have originally evolved in the great Tethys Ocean which occupied the middle latitudes of the northern hemisphere in the Tertiary, and subsequently colonised the south.

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Dr W.R.P. Bourne, Department of Zoology, Aberdeen University, Tillydrone Avenue, Aberdeen AB9 2TN, Scotland.

## The Plymouth Sheathbill

by Chief Officer R.S. Jay, RFA

Yellow-billed Sheathbills *Chionis alba* are notorious for settling on ships in the South Atlantic when they migrate north from Antarctica in the winter, as observed by Cdr F. Milner on HMS *Invincible* during the Falkland campaign (*Sea Swallow* 32: 77-82). Individuals are periodically also carried north to such places as St Helena, and have even reached Carlingford Lighthouse, Co. Down in December 1892 and Plymouth in September 1982 (*Birding World* 5: 382-390). It may be useful to place on record a few more details of the last, which may affect its status as a British species.

The bird was already present when I arrived on RFA *Pearleaf* when she called at Gibraltar on her way home from the South Atlantic on 3 August, and there may originally have been two. They might have been fed by her Chinese crew, though they seem much more likely to have tried to eat the other one, and found it unpalatable. It was not known that the birds had ever been caged. By the time we arrived at the Yonderberry fuel jetty opposite Plymouth dockyard before refit, I decided as First Officer that its unsavoury habits were not conducive to good order and discipline, and personally shooed it ashore, although it took some time to get the message.

It was therefore rather disconcerting when a few days later it was reported throughout the media that an exotic Sheathbill had arrived at Millbay docks, and was attracting thousands of "twitchers". I started to wonder if I could have imported a prohibited species, and lay low lest anyone should ask awkward questions, but they never did. Soon afterwards it was reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, first, that the bird was being returned home in a warship, and then that it had died before it arrived, and I wondered if the First Lieutenant might also have become fed up with its nasty habits?

R.S. Jay, Glenties, Plaidy, East Looe, Cornwall PL13 1LF.

## Little Gulls in Galway Bay - where do they come from?

by R.F. Rutledge

Except for occurrences in Galway Bay Harbour, the Little Gull *Larus minutus* is extremely rare on the west coast of Ireland. Small numbers only are recorded each winter in Galway Harbour, but especially in February and March there is an annual influx of loose flocks there, with recent totals of c20, c30 and c50, and on one occasion 120 birds.

These flocks appear very soon after strong or gale force westerly winds, and disappear again immediately the winds die down. The mystery is where do they come from, and why only during such winds? They are not known at the mouth of Galway Bay, nor around the Aran Islands.

Presumably they must come from somewhere west of Galway Bay, and possible areas of turbulence near the Porcupine Bank seems a likely region. It would be most helpful if a watch could be made in February and March, in the vicinity of the Porcupine Bank (53.5°N 13.5°W). The adults of these very small gulls can be readily recognised, even at a distance, from the distinctively dark undersides to their wings.

Major R.F. Rutledge, Doon, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow, Eire.

## REVIEWS

### A PROPOSAL TO MONITOR EUROPEAN OILED BIRDS

**Camphuysen, C.J. and van Franeker, J.A. 1992. The value of beached bird surveys in monitoring oil pollution.** Proposal for a European Beached Bird Survey (EBBS) to monitor the effectiveness of policy measures to reduce oil pollution at sea. *Techn. Rapp. Vogelbeschirming* 10: 1-195. Vogelbeschirming Nederland, Driebergseweg, 16-C, 3708 JB Zeist, Netherlands. 32.50 D. fl., (including postage) + 11 D. fl. giro bank charges. (ISSN 0924-5103).

Dead birds have long been recognised by the public as the most obvious evidence for pollution at sea, and by conservation organisations as a formidable means of raising funds and securing political influence. Ever since pollution first got out of hand following the introduction of the use of oil for fuel at sea on a large scale during World War I, there have therefore been periodic surveys of the occurrence of oiled birds on the shore which have played an important part in agitation for the control of first oil and more recently toxic chemical pollution. However, for much of the time few dead birds come ashore, and when they do it may be uncertain where they came from and why they died, since many seabirds may also periodically die from a variety of other causes - such as bad weather, food shortages, and disease, and their bodies may become oiled after death.

Some progress was made towards unravelling the situation, which clearly required prolonged systematic surveys backed up by complex laboratory investigations, when the Seabird Group and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds combined to organise amateur international beached bird surveys through NW Europe in the late 1960s. Then, in a new political climate, a new management of the RSPB decided first to take over the survey in the 1970s, and then to terminate it in the 1980s. It is now galling, though I suppose we can only be glad, to see others come forward to pick up our dropped torch with a proposal for a wider European survey of the incidence of oiled birds based in Holland at a cost of 1.5-2 million ECU (£0.5-0.7 million) annually, half provided by the European Community and half locally.

It is proposed to start in late 1995 to use amateurs, directed by professionals, for regular surveys of the dead birds washed up on beaches, the proportion oiled, the nature of the oil, and the incidence of other causes of death, "to provide national and supra-national authorities in Western Europe with an up-dated policy document on the effectiveness of their actions to reduce marine oil pollution". While this all seems very laudable, in view of past experience, I also wonder whether, as it was once said of money matters, that there should be "no taxation without representation", and since the results are rather simple, and their political and economic importance is considerable, the volunteers asked to support this pyramid should also insist on retaining control over the results, instead of simply handing them over, regardless of the consequences, to yet another official bureaucracy?

W.R.P.B.

## PACIFIC SYMPOSIUM

Vermeer, K., Briggs, K.T., Morgan, K.H. and Siegel-Causey, D. (eds.) 1993. *The status, ecology and conservation of Marine Birds of the North Pacific. Proceedings of a symposium sponsored by the Pacific Seabird Group, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the British Columbia Ministry of Lands, Environment and Parks, held at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, B.C. on 22 and 23 February 1990.* Pp. 263, Canadian Wildlife Service Special Publication, Ottawa. ISBN 0-662-20359-3.

The North Pacific is a vast area, and while it was known that its seabirds have been receiving increasing attention in recent years, it has been difficult for the rest of the world to keep track of the results. This is therefore a most valuable publication, which develops the theme of several previous symposia in the 1970s (*Sea Swallow* 31: 69-70) under three headings, "Bird distribution at sea as determined by physical and biological processes", "status, ecology and conservation of nesting and visiting seabirds" and "environmental hazards to seabirds". It is difficult to summarise it all briefly - everyone seriously interested in the subject should read it for themselves. My worst criticism is that it includes no clear conclusion, which I would have thought must surely be that man and the other predators that he has introduced to the breeding sites (notably the fur-bearing animals deliberately released to feed upon the wildlife of the wonderful northern islands) have between them done much more harm to seabirds than all the other much more fashionable threats put together?

W.R.P.B.

## MEDITERRANEAN SEABIRD GROUP

J.S. Aguilar, X. Monbailliu, and A. Paterson (eds.) 1993. *Status and Conservation of Seabirds: Ecogeography and Mediterranean Action Plan: Proceedings of the Second Mediterranean Seabird Symposium, Calvia, 21-26 March 1989*. Pp. 386, ISBN 84-604-6710-4. Sociedad Espanola de Ornithologia, Facultad de Biologia, 28040 Madrid, Spain, 2,500 ptas, plus postage.

MEDMARAVIS (the Mediterranean Seabird Group, address BP2, 83470 Saint Maximin, France) is one of the most active bodies of its kind, and organises impressive conferences with outstanding "Proceedings". The latest includes no less than 44 papers, all except three in English, and the others (in Spanish) with English summaries, arranged under the headings "Status and distribution of breeding populations", "Post-nuptial distribution", "Recent ecological research", and "Habitat conservation and Action Plan". In addition to a vast amount of new information on Mediterranean birds (including a summary of RNBWS sea reports on pp. 195-202), there are some particularly important accounts of the great Russian and Ukrainian seabird colonies on the north side of the Black Sea. This must join its predecessor as one of the most important seabird publications of recent years.

W.R.P.B.

## PRINTER'S FOOTNOTE

This edition of *Sea Swallow* will be the last after nearly twenty-five years in which myself and my colleague Jim Howitt will have had a hand in the production. Jim retired last year and I am about to follow suit, with my binoculars at the ready.

Due to the meticulous care and dedication of your editor, and despite the often complicated nature of the typesetting, *Sea Swallow* is one of the few journals which proceeds through our print factory without a hitch. I have always enjoyed reading the articles by RNBWS members on their birdwatching trips and memories. Having been a keen birdwatcher since my teens, reading of other enthusiasts' enjoyment of birdwatching makes putting their efforts into black and white a pleasurable task.

Over the past few years I have managed to travel to the Far East and the Caribbean, the most memorable event being a two-day stay at the ASA Wright Nature Centre in Trinidad, where the variety of birds is simply unbelievable. This, in common with one of your recent contributors, was followed by a trip to the Caroni Swamp to watch the Scarlet Ibis coming into roost (see *Sea Swallow* 38:59-60).

RNBWS members can rest assured that the future production of *Sea Swallow* is in the safe and capable hands of Michael Casement, editor, and their printers. May I wish you all good luck, and many happy hours birdwatching in the future.

F. W. WILSON  
Dinwiddie Grieve Limited

**Bird & Wildlife Bookshop** at 2-4 Princes Arcade, Piccadilly, London SW1Y 6DS. (Tel: 071-2871407). A huge selection of reference books are stocked here, together with a limited number of backnumbers of *Sea Swallow* Vols 31-40, available at reduced prices, also copies of Volume 42. Enquiries for earlier editions of *Sea Swallow* should be made direct to Michael Casement, who holds a limited stock for sale at £2 (plus postage).

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### INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Interested persons are invited to submit contributions for *Sea Swallow*; authors do not need to be RNBWS members. Material may take the form of papers, notes, progress reports, letters or reviews.

The style used in *Sea Swallow* should be followed, with the standard abbreviations, nomenclature and use of references.

Manuscripts should ideally be typed in double spacing, together with figures and diagrams. Those with facilities to do so, are encouraged to send on diskette (3.5" preferred), in **ASCI format**, together with a print-out.

Contributions are welcome at any time, but if for inclusion in the next edition, must reach the Editor by 1st March.

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